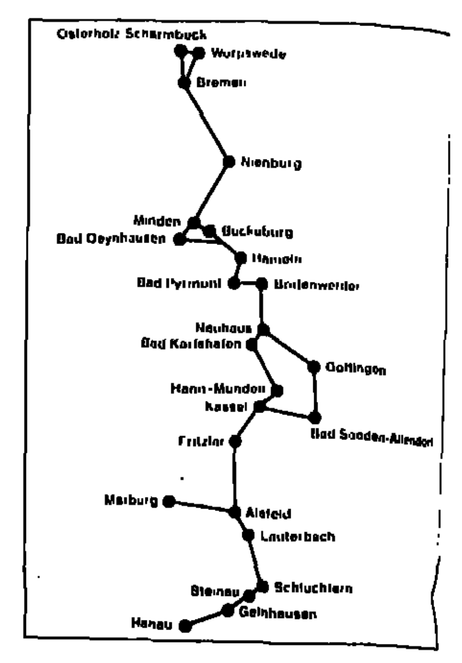
Routes to tour in Germany

The German Fairy Tale Route



1 Bremen
2 Bodenwerder, home of Münchhausen
3 Hanau, birthplace of the Brothers Grimm
4 Alsfeld

German roads will get you there – even if nostalgia is your destination. On your next visit why not call to mind those halcyon childhood days when your mother or father told you fairy tales, maybe German ones? The surroundings in which our great fairy tale writers lived or the scenes in which the tales themselves were set will make their meaning even clearer and show you that many are based on a fairly realistic background.

On a tour from Hanau, near Frankfurt, where the Brothers Grimm were born, to Bremen, where the Town Band (consisting of a donkey, a dog, a cat and a cockerel) played such dreadful music that it put even robbers to flight, you will enjoy the varying kinds of countryside. And do stop over at Bodenwerder. That was where Baron Münchhausen told his breathtaking lies.

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The German Tribune

Hamburg, 17 May 1987
Twenty-sixth year - No. 1273 - By air

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF THE GERMAN PRESS

C 20725 C
ISSN 0016-8858

Sobering political realities in the missiles issue



How *strangely* the *fronts* have changed since Nato's missile deployment decision, when it was popular to dismiss Bonn as a vassal of Washington.

Today much the same pundits argue that Bonn should not stand in the way of Washington's desire for "double zero" missile disarmament.

The decision had already been made and resistance would merely isolate the Federal Republic.

This *change is striking. Critics of* missile deployment would have liked to see the Federal Republic go out on a limb and refuse to allow Pershing 2 and cruise missiles to be stationed in Germany.

The upshot of this advice was soon to be seen in the fate that of the Social Democrats as a party.

Critics of Bonn's reluctance to agree with the double zero option would like to see it stay in line with what seems to be the current state of the art of US-Soviet relations.

This advice, like the earlier advice to do just the opposite, falls well clear of the fundamental issue involved.

We weren't and haven't been anyone's vassal. What we have to do on each issue is analyse and define our own interests. Only then can we arrive at a decision —

Page 2: French nuclear consensus looking fragile

even at the risk of a friendly superpower like the United States furrowing its brow.

Konrad Adenauer knew a thing or two about this risk. Even under the Kennedy administration mention was made in the White House of "profoundly neurotic Bonn," *to quote an associate of JFK.*

But where do *these* "neuroses" originate if not in the country's geostrategic position on the borderline between East *and West and in the Federal Republic's* extreme territorial vulnerability, offset over the decades by a carefully nurtured defence cocoon?

Germany's allies have benefited from this incorporation of an unstable terrain. They have gained in security because West Germany has become a firm part of *a credible defence concept.*

Nato strategy is not, of course, something static. It has repeatedly been revised. So why not now consider whether *detente, in other words the preservation* of peace, still needs a flexible array of nuclear options? What might we dispense with?

*These are not questions to be answer*ed off pat. Alliance strategy is not the result of laboratory experiments; it is the result of a specific analysis of threat.

There is no change in this respect merely because Mr Gorbachov speaks with a tongue different from that of his predecessors.

It would hardly be fair to insist on the Federal Republic alone proving the accuracy of a new security equation, and Chancellor Kohl has rightly ruled out any such idea.

The debate now in progress must be based on the first principle of the North Atlantic Treaty: the unity of Nato territory and the indivisibility of its security.

Nato must not come to accept the idea that its territory on the East-West borderline in Europe, the Federal Republic of Germany, may be "singularly overshadowed" by the other side's ballistic missiles as a result of disarmament plans.

Yet that is exactly what would happen if the "double zero option" as proposed by Moscow were to stop short at nuclear systems with a range of 500km.

That would leave a Soviet monopoly of 593 Scud B missiles with a range of 300km and capable of striking at the defence *infrastructure of the key Nato country* in continental Europe at any point.

If the "double zero" is to be seriously considered, ranges must be reduced to *include all land-based systems down to a* range of, say, 80km.

When Nato proposed, as part of its 1981 "zero option," to drop a key option — *penetrating deep into Soviet territory* with the Pershing 2, it clearly had no intention of going yet further.

The West did not plan to enable the *other side in return to threaten the entire* territory of the Federal Republic with a single missile system — over and above its conventional superiority.

Helmut Schmidt may now argue in the Hamburg weekly *Die Zeit* that this Soviet superiority has always existed, but that is no reason why we should not raise the issue, *especially* when we are prepared to dispense with land-based nuclear deterrent options.

That would be our last opportunity of doing so. Thereafter we would no longer have any lever by which to influence Moscow's conventional defence arrangements.

We would then need to switch from Nato's flexible response to a conventional attack to sea-based systems that are most inflexible inasmuch as they form part of the strategic sector.

All these considerations entail a high degree of abstraction. They juggle with weapons as though everyone was a grand master at the nuclear game. The political reality is more sobering.

The Soviet Union has tabled a proposal aimed not just at disarmament but at a fundamental "restructuring" of Western strategy.

This is suggested by a superpower that has yet to prove itself in the least worthy of the confidence needed even to enter into such far-reaching considerations.

We may hope that Mr Gorbachov's aim is to arrive at a turning-point in international relations, but it would be irresponsible to bank on mere promises, especially in respect of the system he advocates.

Soviet promises are constantly submitted to subtle changes in wording. We in return are expected to abandon security instruments of our own double-quick.

The United States must not allow itself to be misled, much though it may relish the idea of a summit. A treaty ready to be signed on a zero option in respect of the original medium-range missiles would be a bountiful agenda for a superpower summit.

Making any such treaty verifiable and a firm foundation for confidence-building is in itself a monumental task.

It would be more than enough not to embark on the second stage of *disarmament* until sufficient confidence has been gained in the progress of the first.

That is a maxim dictated by common sense, by security and, in the final analysis, by serious negotiating policy.

Thomas Kielinger

(Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt, Bonn, 8 May 1987)



Bonn Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher (right) with Vice President George Bush in Washington. (Photo: dpa)

Genscher's task in Washington

Foreign Minister Genscher made a one-day trip to Washington to discuss the missiles options. His task as a transatlantic intermediary was not easy.

Europe needs more time to work out a clear policy on medium-range missile. America feels it should hurry up.

So Herr Genscher's main task, yet again, was to persuade the US to be patient. There are limits to America's patience. A treaty on the withdrawal at least of longer-range intermediate missiles must be negotiated by the end of the year if Mr Reagan is to sign it as President.

But there are good reasons why the Americans ought not to lose patience for a while.

Washington values as close a Western formation as possible. Going it alone is to be avoided, especially as it would fuel the fires of European — and German — fears of decoupling.

Herr Genscher's outline of Bonn policy was received cordially by US Secretary of State Shultz.

Bonn's official position is approval of the zero option for longer-range intermediate missiles and further consideration *of the double zero proposal on shorter*-range missiles.

The US doesn't like European — and German — hesitation on the double zero *option. Rearm or disarm: no matter what* you do, there is no satisfying the Europeans. Mr Shultz did not agree. He tried hard to show understanding of the need *for a thorough debate on a decision* of such importance for Germany.

Besides, it is no secret in Washington that Herr Genscher appreciates American views better than other members of the Bonn government.

These views are unchanged. Mr Shultz plans to negotiate a treaty for his President to sign. He continues to feel the double zero option makes sense.

Rainer Bonhorst

(Westdeutsche Allgemeine, Essen, 12 May 1987)

IN THIS ISSUE

■ WORLD AFFAIRS

Middle East parties all want talks — but what sort?

Discussion about an international Middle East peace conference may have intensified, especially in Israel, but that doesn't mean all sides have the same idea in mind.

The opposite is nearer the truth. The first, fundamental distinction must be drawn between the Arabs and the Israelis, with the ones seeing the conference as an instrument and the others at best prepared to see it as mere frills or trimming.

Differences on the manner and meaning of the conference also exist within both the Arab and Israeli camps.

The Syrians, and with them the PLO, are calling for an international peace conference much like the one that began in Geneva on 21 December 1973 after the October 1973 war.

There the Arabs refused to talk directly with Israel. They negotiated with the US and Soviet Foreign Ministers,



who in turn conferred with each other via UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim.

The Geneva talks were adjourned without results on account of impending elections in Israel. They never were resumed.

Damascus and the PLO now hope the scenario may be similar, with the additional participation of the other three permanent members of the UN Security Council (Britain, France and China).

They again reject any idea of direct negotiations. The aim of the conference would be to force Israel to accept the numerous UN resolutions, especially the ones calling on it to withdraw from occupied territories.

Jordan has abandoned this approach, realising that it is unlikely to succeed and, above all, unlikely to bring peace.

Amman first and foremost expects an *international conference to provide the* international backing a small, weak state such as Jordan needs to be able to risk such a venture as peace talks with Israel.

Jordanian officials make it clear that they "naturally" intend to negotiate directly with Israel at the conference as they envisage it.

They are evidently also prepared to drop officially Yasser Arafat's PLO and allow other Palestinians to take its place.

Palestinians, when all is said and done, make up over 60 per cent of Jordan's population.

Amman also envisages the five permanent members of the UN Security Council taking part — and, of course, the Arab states directly associated with the conflict.

Jordanian officials do not openly say so but they create the impression that inviting these other Arab states is as far as they feel the need to go.

If, for instance, Syria declines to take part, then Jordan would be prepared to negotiate with Israel on its own.

Egypt can no longer really be considered a party to the negotiations, having already signed the Camp David Agreement with Israel. But Cairo continues to *play a leading role in paving the way for* talks.

Cairo is working closely alongside Amman and supports the Jordanian position, whereas Lebanon, insofar as it has anything to say, tends to side with Syria.

It does not do so out of conviction. Lack of sovereign domestic authority is the reason, coupled with growing dependence on Damascus.

The Soviet Union has long called for an international peace conference, and in the past this Soviet demand has doubtless partly been a bid to gain influence in the Middle East.

Under Mr Gorbachov's leadership this impression is slowly changing, giving way to a gradual feeling that Moscow is seriously seeking to set right the ties with Israel it broke off on the eve of the 1967 Six-Days' War.

The Soviet position thus slowly seems to be moving away from the Syrian and toward the Jordanian viewpoint.

There have been changes in the US attitude too. Washington initially rejected the idea of an international conference, aiming to isolate the Soviet Union still further.

Due to disappointment with the Middle East the United States is now readier to share responsibility for the proceedings.

This change in outlook is unlikely to have been triggered by the European Community's resolution in support of a conference, but European views will have played a part even though views are still diametrically opposed on the PLO.

Last but not least, in Israel contrasting views prevail, with the right-wing Likud bloc led by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir opposing an international Middle East conference just as it was opposed to the Camp David Agreement.

It is afraid that negotiations of the kind might develop a *momentum* of their own from which Israel could no longer extract itself.

Disadvantage

Mathematically, of course, Israel would always be outnumbered were the conference not to be held on a bilateral basis, as Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and his Israel Labour Party well know.

That is why he advocates "direct negotiations after an international inaugural conference session."

International participants are not to be in a position to impose solutions and, if at all possible, they are not to take part in the negotiations proper.

Views are also diametrically opposed on the aims of a conference. The Arabs expect it to lead to a total Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967, with all conceivable consequences, from setting up an independent Palestine (PLO) to a confederation with Jordan (Amman).

Israeli opinion is agreed, Mr Peres says, that not all occupied territory can be returned, while Mr Shamir's *Likud* doesn't want to make any territorial concessions whatever.

The official Israeli viewpoint is that negotiations must be held without strings and that it must be agreed that all issues can be discussed.

As for Soviet participation, Israel would much prefer to make do with the Americans, but seems prepared — at a price — to waive this preference.

The price is readiness on Moscow's part to ease restrictions on exit permits for Soviet Jews and to resume full diplomatic relations with Israel.

Peter Philipp

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 6 May 1987)

French nuclear consensus looking fragile



Mr Gorbachov's double zero option has split French opinion, even government opinion, it was clear at the Kohl-Chirac summit in Strasbourg.

France's much-vaunted national consensus on defence issues may have enabled the French to draw up without difficulty an arms plan for 1987 to 1991.

But views differ even in the government's ranks on a disarmament concept for nuclear missiles in Europe, with Defence Minister André Giraud and Foreign Minister Jean-Bernard Raimond at loggerheads for the first time.

The situation in France is thus a mirror image of the position in the Federal Republic of Germany, where Foreign Minister Genscher and Defence Minister Wörner also hold progressively conflicting views on the Soviet proposals.

So the Strasbourg summit was an opportunity for both heads of government, Chancellor Kohl and Premier Chirac, to itemise their two countries' security interests.

Yet how are foreign policy security interests to be pigeonholed within a joint framework when the missile debate is increasingly proving a domestic policy issue on both sides of the Rhine?

Since the Soviet leader came up with his double zero proposal in February the French have begun to suspect that the Germans might land in domestic difficulties if unsatisfactory follow-up negotiations on short-range systems were to make a fresh round of missile deployment in Western Europe necessary.

This is the background against which the debate on a new defence doctrine for the 1990s has been triggered in Paris.

It is a debate held under a Socialist President who is keen to prevent a conservative Prime Minister from growing too strong and thereby standing a better chance of doing well in the Presidential elections next April.

Foreign Minister Raimond has already come under cross-fire. When he warned against denuclearising Western Europe he was advised by President Mitterrand to behave "more diplomatically" in respect of the further course of the dialogue between Washington and Moscow.

Defence Minister Giraud in contrast told the defence committee of the National Assembly that in his view the double zero option would lead Western Europe straight to neutrality.

Confusion has also been caused in French government ranks by a speech made by ex-Premier Raymond Barre, who heads the list of advocates of a change in French military strategy.

That puts the Gaullist leader, M. Chirac, in a quandary. It will not be easy for him to abandon, against opposition from two former Gaullist Premiers, Pierre Messmer and Michel Debré, Gaullist military principles that have been valid for 20 years.

M. Barre has been accused of motives that are not entirely selfless. He is likely soon to be competing with M. Chirac in the Presidential election stakes.

The French Fifth Republic is certainly on the move, as can be inferred from the fact that senior military men are keen to move forward the borders of the "sanctuary" from the Rhine to the Elbe.

They talk in terms of bridging any gap the Americans may create with the aid of the new short-range (400km) Hades missile.

"That," they argue, "has always been what the Germans wanted."

As for attendant nuclear circumstances, all that is needed, the argument continues, is to retrieve an old plan from the shelf and redefine pre-strategic weapons as tactical artillery.

They would then no longer be under the exclusive control of the French President and could be assigned, given residual occupation rights, to French territorial troops stationed in the Federal Republic.

Premier Chirac would then exercise command over nuclear weapons. This is a train of thought that may well also have domestic political ramifications.

After meeting Chancellor Kohl, who had previously conferred with Britain's Margaret Thatcher, M. Chirac was due to visit Moscow in mid-May. That is yet another reason for M. Giraud not to allow himself to be put under pressure timewise.

The French Defence Minister says the disarmament debate on medium- and short-range missiles in Europe tends to conceal the true problem.

It is, he says, that the superpowers will continue to have 12,310 Soviet and 11,285 American nuclear warheads aimed at each other.

This is an angle on which France and Germany might well agree, with opinion in both countries increasingly feeling the nuclear issue must be dealt with as a whole.

In Germany the point raised is that missile disarmament might leave the Federal Republic as a theatre for tactical, short-range nuclear devices.

In France security interests are felt to be jeopardised by the ICBM threat to which the Fifth Republic would be subjected. Paris is clearly concentrating to an increasing extent on a reduction in strategic arsenals.

Peter Ruge

(Die Welt, Bonn, 4 May 1987)

The German Tribune

Friedrich Reinecke Verlag GmbH, 3-4 Hartwicusstrasse, D-2000 Hamburg 76, Tel.: 22 85 1, Telex: 02-14733

Editor-in-chief: Otto Heinz. Editor: Alexander Anthony. English language sub-editor: Simon Burnett. — Distribution manager: Georgine Picone.

Advertising rates list No. 15
Annual subscription DM 45
Printed by CW Niemeyer-Druck, Hameln
Distributed in the USA by: MASS MAILINGS Inc., 540 West 24th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011
Articles in THE GERMAN TRIBUNE are translated from the original text and published by agreement with leading newspapers in the Federal Republic of Germany

In all correspondence please quote your subscription number which appears on the wrapper, between asterisks, above your address.



■ HOME AFFAIRS

Disappointed Berlin mayor not to visit East Berlin

The Mayor of West Berlin, Eberhard Diepgen, is not, after all, going to East Berlin to take part in the divided city's 750th anniversary celebrations.

East Berlin made it clear in a message that he should not come. Last month, East Berlin party boss Erich Honecker said he would not be coming to the West.

So after a lot of yes-they're-coming, no-they're not, neither is. The Western allies in Berlin were not keen on Herr Diepgen going to the East and the Russians didn't like the idea of Herr Honecker going to the West.

But Diepgen refuses to accept that this means that his policy of trying to improve relations with East Berlin has failed.

He says he will still maintain dialogue between East and West and try and improve the situation for people on both sides.

He showed his annoyance at the semi-official cancellation in a speech in the West Berlin assembly. The invitation had been made by Honecker last year.

Herr Diepgen has summoned up a considerable amount of willpower in his efforts not to burn bridges. He knew that the opponents of his policy would accuse him of setting his sights too high.

Diepgen admits a setback but does not accept that it is defeat. Signals from East Berlin seemed to indicate that the door was ajar.

Every word from East Berlin has to be meticulously analysed. This one suggested that a visit by Diepgen would "apparently" seem "inconceivable at the present ." This uncovers some unusual aspects.

It is not, for example, the East Berlin government which complained about the speech Diepgen gave at the city's 750th anniversary celebrations. There is no mention of the government at all.

The statement was officially classed as the personal opinion of the head of the Central Press Department of the East German Foreign Ministry, ambassador Wolfgang Meyer.

Meyer, not East Berlin's government, claimed that "the general public in East Germany and elsewhere" feels that Diepgen's visit is "inconceivable at present".

Meyer's justification obviously did not have its origins in East Germany itself.

It was not until five days after Diepgen's speech was made that East Berlin issued its statement.

In his speech Diepgen described Berlin as a single city and condemned as inhuman fact that East German border guards are compelled to shoot anyone trying to flee to the West.

Although East Germany criticised the speech given by Bonn Chancellor Helmut Kohl on the same occasion Diepgen's speech was not even casually mentioned.

The initial response was to reprint Soviet statements in East German newspapers in which reference was made to an "abuse of the anniversary celebrations via defamatory remarks".

Meyer used this Soviet wording in his statement without explaining what the defamatory remarks were.

This was just one indication that the idea to break off the inner-Berlin contacts was hatched in Moscow.

The Soviet leadership primarily uses German-German links to influence the policies of the Bonn government.

As these relations are only a small part of the Kremlin's foreign policy as opposed to a significant foreign policy field for East Germany, the interests of the two governments frequently clash.

In this particular case the Soviet Union has taken over the initiative.

Up until July last year the respective fronts looked very inflexible.

In an official letter Mayor Diepgen warned *Land* heads of government not to jeopardise Berlin's status by attending official 750th anniversary ceremonies in East Berlin.

In October Erich Honecker personally invited Diepgen to come along to the celebration in East Berlin and indicated that the East German government was willing to discuss a number of Berlin problems with Diepgen.

Diepgen was willing to accept the invitation, but the three western allies who hold supreme power in West Berlin — America, Britain and France — as well as the Bonn government had misgivings about a new Deutschlandpolitik initiative centred around Berlin.

They agreed that Diepgen should for his part invite Erich Honecker to come to West Berlin in the hope that Honecker would immediately reject the idea. In an effort to make sure that he did refuse the allies and Bonn asked Diepgen to invite Honecker without delay.

This surprise move would not only have guaranteed Honecker's refusal, but also endangered Diepgen's own policy of detente. This explains why Diepgen refused to bow to the will of the western allies by trying to sound out first whether Honecker would consider accepting an invitation.

This approach was apparently also favoured by Honecker himself, who seemed interested in a visit to West Berlin.

Both sides felt that associated question of protocol and political problems were soluble.

The western allies felt that political developments in Berlin might start getting out of hand if the idea gathered momentum.

Together with the Soviet Union they had drawn up a four-power agreement for Berlin in 1971 in an attempt to neutralise Berlin as a trouble spot.

Since then there had been no more disputes over Berlin, especially since the western allies had prevented links between West Berlin and Bonn from becoming any closer.

It now looked, however, as if closer ties between East and West Berlin might upset the four-power applecart.

The concern of the western allies coincided with the concern of the Soviet Union, which was hoping that the isolation of West Berlin would lead to a gradual "wasting away" of the city and thus, in the long run, turn Berlin into the desired "independent political entity".

Honecker's willingness to foster dialogue with West Berlin was viewed by Moscow as a threat to this process.

A setback, not a defeat, says Diepgen. (Photo: Werek)

The western allies talked to the Soviet Union, and the result was that, following the inistence of the Kremlin, Honecker turned down the invitation.

Diepgen accused the western allies of having teamed up with the Soviet Union to prevent Honecker's visit and, consequently, of also having stopped his visit to East Berlin.

Although the East Berlin leadership was still willing to maintain contacts with Diepgen, the Soviet Union found his speech at the West Berlin gala a convenient excuse to urge East Berlin to cancel its invitation. East Berlin has been pushed, but it has acted to contain the damage.

Anita Röntgen

(Hannoversche Allgemeine, 8 May 1987)

Living standards compared in both Germanies

East Germany's standard of living is slipping further behind West Germany's, says a report by the Bonn government.

In issuing the report, the Minister for Intra-German Affairs, Dorothee Wilms, said incomes and pensions had declined compared with the Federal Republic since 1970 despite big efforts in investment, research and efforts to make better use of labour.

The report, compiled by independent economic experts, compared the two economic systems and economic trends in both states.

The last report of this kind was compiled 12 years ago. The first part, which was completed by the Berlin-based Wissenschaftliche Kommission, deals with the development of respective economic systems since 1970.

The second part focuses on economic development in the two countries and was written by the Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung in Berlin under the supervision of its president, Hans-Jürgen Krupp.

Frau Wilms said that when East Berlin stresses the need for reforms of the kind envisaged by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov for his own country it can justifiably claim to have the best economic performance in the entire East Bloc.

The inner-German comparison, she said, is less favourable for East Germany.

Krupp said economic growth in East Germany was much more dynamic than in the Federal Republic between 1970 and 1983.

This had enabled East Germany to close the production gap. But this ground was not gained in output per worker.

The findings of the comparative report revealed that productivity in East Germany was already 50 per cent behind the corresponding West German figure at the beginning of the 1970s, as opposed to the figure of 30 per cent previously assumed.

Since then, Krupp added, the development of productivity in both countries has "more or less progressed at the same pace".

The gap between the two countries has not therefore narrowed.

The report indicates that structural change in East Germany has lagged behind developments in this field in the Federal Republic, whereas the employment level has continued to increase.

Although the volume of goods produced per capita has increased, the consumption level in East Germany during the period under review fell due to the fact that East Germany has stepped up exports.

This means that East Germans have been able to buy less during recent years even though they have had to work longer to ensure the same purchasing power.

Whereas one in three women in the Federal Republic of Germany goes out to work, the corresponding ratio in East Germany is one to two.

The average weekly working time in the East is 43.5 hours; in the Federal Republic, on the other hand, it has fallen from 42 to 40 hours a week.

The retirement pensions in East Germany only ensure a minimum income.

Per capita consumption of food, drink and tobacco is the same in both countries, said Krupp, but East Germany lags behind the Federal Republic of Germany apprecibly in the field of technical consumer goods.

However, the report does confirm that East Germany provides much more maternity and family benefits than the Federal Republic. This is undoubtedly a major determinant factor for the higher birth rate in East Germany.

Thalheim emphasised the independence of his institution and the 26 individual authors before elucidating the unchanged differences between the economic systems in the two Germanies.

He also pointed out that the East German economy was the strongest in the entire East Bloc.

A new economic policy concept, he explained, had been developed during the 1970s.

This new concept included pooling a large section of nationalised industry in combines, the limited decentralisation of decision-making powers, the transition from extensive to intensive economic growth and emphasis on science and technology as a means of improving economic performance.

The socialist planned economy in East Germany, says the report, has been made more efficient by minor rectifications.

A fundamental reorientation of the system towards a "socialist market economy", however, is still rejected.

The report regards the lack of innovation, the inadequate motivation of workers, the insufficient flexibility of the planned economy system and the huge administrative apparatus as the characteristic features of the East German economic system.

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 7 May 1987)

■ GERMANY

Berlin celebrates May Day with mayhem in the streets

Sixty people were injured, 36 shops looted and 35 fires lit during riots in the Berlin borough of Kreuzberg on May Day night. The police say the damage to property done by "about 300 militants and 600 hangers on" was several million marks. More than 50 were arrested and a special court session was held. Firemen and onlookers said the violence was worse than during the squatters' riots in 1981.

Days after the riots nearly everyone is still wondering just what happened in Kreuzberg. Everyone except the East Berlin *Neues Deutschland*, which firmly proclaimed, from the other side of the Wall, that the police had brutally broken up a street festival.

In West Berlin, the city government has retreated into debate on police tactics. Interior Senator Wilhelm Kewenig announced swift changes in contingency planning.

Mayor Eberhard Diepgen was foolish enough to allow himself to be quoted as saying these changes should ensure there would be no repetition of the riots.

The police do seem to have lost track of the situation that night. Three hours after the riots began the number of police called in was increased from 250 to a mere 400.

Yet a spokesman for the city's Department of the Interior said that riots must be expected in view of a police raid that morning in which several thousand leaflets calling on people to boycott the census were found. The leaflets were impounded.

Eye-witness reports leave little doubt that entire streets were without police protection for hours that night. That is sure to have repercussions.

The affair was the Berlin police's most serious setback since spring 1981 when rioters demolished much of Kurfürstendamm as police looked on apparently powerlessly.

Many think that this cost the mayor at the time, Hans-Jochen Vogel, any chance he may have had of winning the elections he called shortly afterward.

Any assessment of May Day violence in Kreuzberg must take into account the social structure of the borough.

Local SPD leader Walter Momper, who himself lives in Kreuzberg, has pointed out that the borough houses more problem groups than any other part of the city.

In combination, he said, they were a critical mass that could react and explode again at any time.

Kreuzberg has been at boiling point for years. Despite slum clearance schemes there are still many run-down turn-of-the-century tenement blocks where people who can afford nothing better live.

These are the homes of the young, the "alternatives" and the poor. In the late 1970s Kreuzberg was the centre of a squatters' movement launched in protest against housing speculators.

Kreuzberg, population 127,000, is the most densely-populated Berlin borough. Punks and prostitutes line Potsdamer Strasse. There is a high percentage of foreigners. Thirty per cent are Turks, Greeks or Yugoslavs.

The situation has progressively deteriorated, especially for second-generation foreign residents, whose troubles have been described by Turkish writer Aras Ören in several books.

Young Germans have felt the pinch too, even though the city administration says that for years it has invested heavily in the borough.

Yet Waldemar Schulze, Kreuzberg borough councillor in charge of welfare, says he carried out a survey of his own at Kreuzberg schools some years ago.

He checked all schools in the borough and arrived at the conclusion that over 50 per cent of school-leavers found neither a job nor job training of any kind.

The percentage was even higher among foreign residents, and at the welfare office, Schulze says, many young claimants say they don't want money; they want work.

He says he warned the authorities at the time that social dynamite was being laid and must surely be detonated sooner or later.

The Senate had merely berated him. He was hardly surprised at what had happened. He felt sorry for the people who had stayed in Kreuzberg for decades with very little prospect of improvement — and had now been really scared.

Eighteen of the 44 people arrested on the night of the riots were unemployed. Twelve were students or schoolchildren.

They have been charged with serious breaches of the peace, resisting arrest, larceny and grievous bodily harm.

Yet in reality no-one really knows who fomented the riots. Herr Momper merely has the impression that a small group of troublemakers started them.

Whether he is right or not, the public prosecutor says not one of them is among the people arrested. Only fellow-travellers had been rounded up, he said.

The police reported 193 officers injured. The riots were the first in which public property, such as Underground trains, was systematically vandalised.



And a nice day to you as well . . . Berlin after May Day. (Photo: dpa)

It was the first time alternative shops and newspaper kiosks were looted, dozens of fires were raised and the fire brigade prevented from going about its work.

A spokesman for the fire brigade said they had been unable to deal with 55 calls and eventually concentrated on fires in which lives were in jeopardy.

It was the first time local people joined in the looting — people, as Herr Momper said, you would never suspect of going on the rampage. The entire "system of values" had broken down temporarily.

The alternative newspaper *Tageszeitung* wrote that there could well be 750 motives for the riots (this year is being celebrated as the city's 750th anniversary).

Even left-wing extremists who are not usually squeamish about resorting to violence felt, or so they said in a declaration, it was terrible for small shops to be smashed up.

"We call on everyone to make sure that never happens again," they said. Yet one of their number was quoted by the *Tageszeitung* as saying:

"We started the 750th anniversary celebrations a day later than (Mayor) Diepgen, but we put more fire into it!"

Kreuzberg itself, four days after the riots, still creates an impression of irritation and bad temper. The most frequent explanation put forward by people helplessly seeking to account for the riots is that they were simply an explosion.

Some local people say feeling in the area is still running very high and aggression is still far from over.

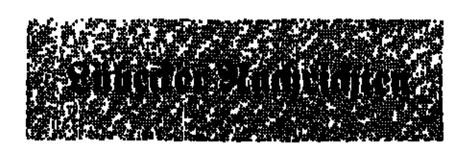
"People are still tense inside," one Berliner said in a radio interview. "They are waiting for something to happen, trying with difficulty to keep their cool."

"I still have a start every time I hear a siren sounding," someone else added.

Otto-Jörg Weis

(Frankfurter Rundschau, 6 May 1987)

Accusations fly as politicians look for the causes



Hans-Jochen Vogel, SPD leader in the Bonn Bundestag and a former mayor of Berlin, has accused the city's ruling CDU of total failure over the May Day riots.

A few years ago it was the other way round.

As mayor he was accused of failure to handle the squatters' riots.

Berlin CDU leader Klaus Landowsky says Herr Vogel seems still to be suffering from the "trauma of his own failure in Berlin."

At the height of the squatters' movement 169 blocks housed squatters. The city is still suffering from the repercussions of the problem.

This first exchange of blows between the Opposition and the ruling party makes it seem lamentably likely that the special parliamentary debate called to discuss the riots will be an exchange of verbal broadsides, with each accusing the other of having been to blame.

It is clear that this approach is unlikely to come any closer to a solution to the real problems faced by the most difficult of Berlin's boroughs.

There is more than a grain of truth in comments from the alternative end of the political spectrum. The riots are, somewhat exaggeratedly, said to have been what the cits administration deserved for having concentrated on the more glamorous Kurfürstendamm area.

Thousands of young people, most without roots, live in Kreuzberg. So do an above-average percentage of unemployed and claimants.

Between them, they form the basis of a long-term problem. The administration cannot simply keep them quiet by taking disciplinary measures, as some politicians seem to want.

The political parties in Berlin would do better to join forces in a quest for longer-term social peace than to squabble on about it.

Hans Ulrich Kersten

(Lübecker Nachrichten, 6 May 1987)

Call for special squad and rubber bullets

The Berlin criminal investigation police have called for rubber bullets to be issued to the force. Ulrich Gähner, of the Berlin branch of the CID Association, also said a special riot squad should be set up.

Manpower increases announced by Interior Senator Wilhelm Kewenig were alone not enough for more effective action against rioters, he said.

Herr Gähner saw no point in the Senator's plan to transfer a special squad to Kreuzberg; the squad was detailed to handle special missions all over the city.

The police would soon reach the end of their tether and be unable to handle the situation if official policy was merely to concentrate on numerical reinforcements.

The Senate ought, he said, to set up an anti-terror squad and give it special training to deal with situations of this kind.

His association would also like to see the Berlin police issued with rubber bullets, more plain-clothes men detailed and more information gathered about violent demonstrators in Berlin and in the Federal Republic.

The police say 192 men were injured on the night of the riots. Eighty-seven required hospital treatment.

Helmuth Rehlen of the Berlin Protestant Church warned against what he called swift judgments and accusations of guilt. He quoted a Kreuzberg Protestant Church resolution mentioning the spread of poverty.

The riots had made it clear what problems had still to be solved in the borough.

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 7 May 1987)



■ PERSPECTIVE

The Pope's visit more political than pastoral this time around

STUTTGARTER NACHRICHTEN

The Pope cut a varied and at times contradictory figure on his second visit to the Federal Republic of Germany: smiling, thoughtful, hesitant and determined.

He is both a modern and a most conservative pope.

Has he sparked the hoped-for spirit of renewal in the Catholic Church in Germany, or has he, by recalling history, turned back the wheel of time?

He certainly covered a wide range of issues, extending from pastoral difficulties to urgent social and societal problems.

His brief five-day stay may have been billed as a pastoral visit, but it was unquestionably far more political than his first, in 1980.

So the Pope may have countered accusations that the Catholic Church constantly sidestepped important problems, but he also laid himself open to tougher criticism.

A political pope is a pope who is more readily open to attack, and the Holy Father will have to live with attacks after this particular visit.

The ceremonies at which Fr Rupert Mayer and Edith Stein were beatified were worlds apart from his instructions on current affairs.

In the Ruhr Pope John Paul was seen as the modern pope and a warning voice with progressive views.

He warned employers and trade unions not to sacrifice the Lord's Day for the sake of Sunday working.

He made it unmistakably clear to industry and the state that unemployment was not in keeping with human dignity and could not simply be accepted as a fact of life.

It was, he said, a social scandal that the work available was not fairly shared. There can be no doubt that the Pope here took up and continued Catholic social teachings.

His views on the oecumenical movement were far less progressive. Indeed, he took great care to avoid committing himself on Christian unity.

What other interpretation could be given to his statements to representatives of the Protestant Church that premature decisions need not be expected?

On the oecumenical movement the Pope currently creates the impression of being a brakeman rather than a driving force.

This is probably the background against which the warning by Bishop Kruse of Berlin, council chairman of the German Protestant Church, against beating a retreat to traditional denominational viewpoints must be seen.

Moves toward rapprochement between the Catholic and Protestant churches have indeed grown weaker. There is sand in the works.

That is hardly surprising. With his marked tendency toward adoration of the Virgin Mary and toward beatification John Paul created the impression of being a strictly conservative, backward-looking pope.

In Munich and Münster, Cologne and Kevelaer he took the opportunity of refurbishing the Christian virtues of piety, humility and chastity in terms of obedience to the faith and unswerving trust and confidence in the Church's teachings.

Edith Stein and Rupert Mayer, undoubtedly great personalities, were made out to be blameless believers who had never sinned or been guilty of human error.

Does the Church's process of glorification leave no leeway for a modicum of humanity? If not, one is bound to wonder whether beatifications really make sense and whether the beatified can really serve as models.

Do they really help believers by being set on a pedestal to such an extent? Are they not in reality "instrumentalised" as witnesses on behalf of the Church and its policies?

At times one is bound to wonder whether beatification is not increasingly the result of a disconcerting degree of local patriotism.

In the Federal Republic alone 14 dioceses have submitted 33 candidates for consideration!

They stand a fair chance of being beatified. Vatican statistics show John Paul II to have carried out 163 beatifications and 110 canonisations — an inundation when compared with his predecessors' track records.

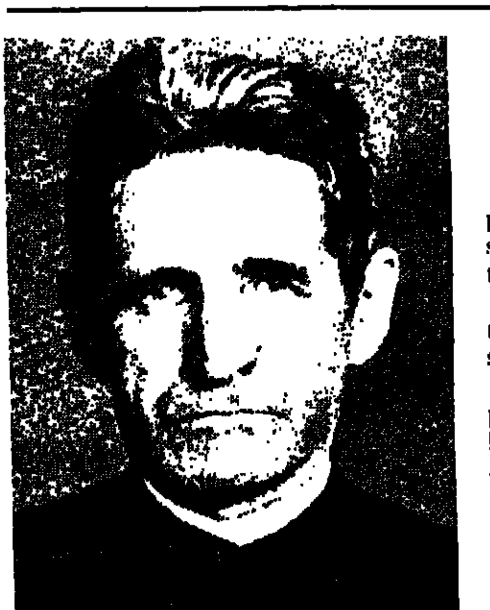
Canonisations were the climax of his second visit to the Federal Republic, and that could, in the long term, have alarming repercussions for the Church and its believers.

There is a risk of the sense of revolutionary progress soon losing momentum and of the Papal renewal giving way to a Papal restoration.

Anton Notz

(Stuttgarter Nachrichten, 5 May 1987)

Row over beatification of nun and priest Nazi victims



Rupert Mayer. . . ready for matyrdom. (Photo: Süddeutscher Verlag)

The Pope's beatification (first step towards sainthood) of two victims of the Nazis, Edith Stein and Rupert Mayer, were the most controversial aspects of the Pope's tour of Germany. Father Mayer was a Jesuit priest who criticised the Nazis. He died in 1945. Edith Stein was born Jewish but converted to Catholicism and became Sister Theresia Benedicta. She was arrested in 1942 in Holland and died the same year in Auschwitz. Jews object to the idea that she was a Catholic martyr. They say she was killed because she was Jewish.

Both Rupert Mayer, a Jesuit priest, and Edith Stein, a Jewish-born Carmelite nun, may have led saintly lives, but whether their sufferings during the Third Reich are to the greater glory of the Catholic Church is another matter.

There is a case to be made for the claim by a Roman Catholic pep group that the beatifications were an attempt to paper over the opportunism embarrassing silence of the Catholic Church after the Nazi came to power 1933. Rupert Mayer, a Stuttgart businessman's son, came from a staunchly conservative, nationally-minded home.

He might have sensed in July 1937 that he couldn't rely on his ecclesiastical superiors in fighting the Nazis

When he was sentenced to six months in prison by a special court (a sentence that has yet to be declared null and void) he appealed to his Jesuit superiors not to intervene in a bid to reduce the sentence.

Rupert Mayer wanted both martyrdom and to resume his sermons to full houses in his Munich church.

A protest note was written by his superiors in Munich. It was doubtless well-meant, but it now reads oddly.

"Rupert Mayer," it said, "really has no need to prove his patriotic sentiments. He is universally acknowledged to have given exemplary service in the Great War.

"He fought the 1918 revolution. He was seriously wounded. He has made countless patriotic speeches in the struggle against Communism and Marxism, once even alongside the Führer.

"All these points are surely sufficient (evidence of his patriotic spirit)."

The reference to the speech "alongside" Hitler in the early 1920s was a misrepresentation.

He had actually said that a practising Catholic could never be a Nazi. For that he was booted out of the assembly hall.

As a young Jesuit he had made a name for himself before the Great War helping poor industrial workers in Munich.

He was constantly in debt to butchers and bakers and frequently attacked rich Catholics , accusing them of lacking charity and stealing from the poor.

In 1914 he volunteered as a chaplain, saw active service in Rumania, where he lost a leg.

In 1919 he returned to his pre-war pastoral work in Munich, where from 1933 he was kept under constant surveillance by the Gestapo, who had stenographers record his sermons word for word.

After serving his prison sentence for "reprehensible attacks on the Party and the state" he refused to tone down his sermons and was sent to Oranienburg concentration camp.

When his health deteriorated the Nazis were worried he might come to be seen as a martyr and set about finding a more "elegant" solution, succeeding with the aid of Church authorities.

He was released from concentration camp in mid-1940 but sent to Ettal, a Benedictine monastery, and strictly forbidden by the Church to make public appearances or deliver sermons.

He was freed by the Americans in April 1945, returned to Munich and died there, on All Saints' Day 1945, after a stroke.

Edith Stein was beatified as a martyr for the Christian faith, which is not strictly true. She was sent to her death in the gas chamber at Auschwitz in 1942 as a Jewess, not as a Catholic nun.

She was born in 1891 in Breslau, where her father was a Jewish timber merchant. Many comments she made before her death make it clear she saw herself as a Jewish martyr.

She expressly saw her imminent death as participation in the sufferings of her Jewish people and a succession to Christ's death on the Cross.

Until the age of 21 she saw herself as an atheist. She studied philosophy in Freiburg and graduated summa cum laude under Edmund Husserl.

She later converted to Catholicism and was baptised in 1922, aged 31. At the end of 1933 she took orders as a Carmelite nun in Cologne.



Edith Stein . . . Catholic convert. (Photo: Werek)

In the 1938 elections she came to notice as a "non-Aryan" who was not entitled to vote. On New Year's Eve 1938 she was taken to a Carmelite nunnery in Holland for safety's sake.

Once the Wehrmacht invaded Holland she was no longer safe there. She was to have been transferred to neutral Switzerland, but the Swiss aliens' police raised objections and the Vatican created bureaucratic difficulties too.

On 2 August 1942 the SS moved in. Edith Stein, her sister Rosa and 1,200 other Catholic Jews were deported. A week later she died in the gas chamber.

She had written to Pope Pius IX in spring 1933 requesting a private audience in which she hoped to persuade him to issue an unequivocal encyclical against the persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany.

The Pope's reply was merely a formal blessing. The Vatican had already concluded a concordat with the Nazi regime, entrusting the Third Reich with a substantial fund of goodwill.

Peter Abspacher

(Nürnberger Nachrichten, 29 April 1987)

■ THE WORKFORCE

Poll shows young people are not impressed by the trade unions

NÜRNBERGER Nachrichten

When young West Germans are asked what they think about trade unions they very rarely use words such as dynamic, imaginative, flexible or modern.

The majority feel that the German Trade Union Federation (DGB) and its 17 member unions are bureaucratic, impersonal and complex institutions, which either disregard the needs of young people altogether or are slow to respond to their problems.

These are just some of the findings of a survey conducted between 1982 and 1985 by the Sociological Research Institute of the University of Göttingen on behalf of the Bonn Youth, Family and Health Ministry and the DGB's Hans Böckler Foundation.

The young male and female interviewees frequently complained that trade union publications are totally uninteresting.

They also criticised the fact that trade unions show little interest in their desire for satisfying jobs and social contacts at work.

The project leader Martin Baethge reached the following conclusion: "If the unions do not change their organisational structures soon they stand very little chance of gaining the support of today's youth."

The survey's findings are a slap in the face for staunch unionists, who only recently did all they could to demonstrate self-confidence, fighting strength and optimism during Labour Day rallies.

It looks as if it's high time for the unions to reconsider their internal structures *and try to give a fillip to their public image.*

According to an opinion poll carried out by the Marplan Institute the trade unions have become generally less popular in society.

The embarrassing sale and repurchase of the union-owned Neue Heimat housing construction and property group only made matters worse.

The DGB's membership figure has dropped by a good 200,000 from a total of 7.85 million members in 1982.

At the same time the degree of industrial unionisation fell from an average of 35 per cent in 1979 to 32.3 per cent in 1984.

It would be wrong to draw the conclusion that disappointed and dissatisfied members have opted out of the trade union movement on a huge scale.

There are numerous reasons for the declining membership figure, the continuingly high level of unemployment being a factor.

This, however, is cold comfort for union officials, whose biggest problem is the fact that membership losses are not being offset by new membership gains.

It's becoming more and more difficult to attract new members, especially young people, women and salaried employees.

The DGB has managed to hold its own to a certain extent among its traditional industrial worker clientèle, even though a dramatic structural change has been taking *place in industry for many years.*

Production industries are being replaced by a growing number of service industries, and typical blue-collar jobs are gradually disappearing as a result of modern technologies and the associated increase in the number of white-collar activities.

Although roughly 50 per cent of the labour force already has salaried worker status only 25 per cent of all salaried employees are unionised — 18 per cent in the DGB, the rest in smaller labour organisations.

There have been plenty of warnings to the unions to start readjusting to these structural upheavals.

Many of the "veteran" trade unionists, who grew up in the factory era, find it difficult to respond to new challenges.

They are unwilling to accept that in today's world class consciousness and traditional trade union ties no longer play the role they once did.

The successes of past campaigns cannot guarantee high membership figures in future.

The assets of the trade union organisations have long since had a sound legal footing, are available to all employees, and not just restricted to those who pay union fees (which are pretty high).

Nowadays, the decision for or against union membership is made on a simple cost-benefit basis.

The sense of individuality of salaried employees generally tends to be more pronounced than their desire for collective representation, a fact which makes this group a particularly problematic target group for union recruiters.

Open-minded officials frankly admit that for reasons of convenience their policies have by-passed and criminally neglected the salaried employees for far too long.

The DGB cannot claim spectacular successes when it comes to activities in this group.

The levelling effect of many wage settlements has in fact tended to put salaried employees off the idea of joining a union.

Trade unions are having particular problems with the new "technical intelligentsia", skilled employees with a key function in the electronic age.

Up to now, union officials have been unable to convince this group that they are the true advocates of their interests.

The trade unions still have the reputation of being opposed to new technologies and averse to too much achievement orientation.

What is needed is a complete reorientation and an organisational reassessing of the trade unions.

If the unions want to gain the support of new sections of the working population, support which is essential if the trade union movement wants to survive, it needs officials with new ideas and greater flexibility.

Like Franz Steinkühler, for example, the head of the metalworkers' union IG Metall.

Steinkühler has already done away with a number of antiquated customs in his union and knows how to sell his personality in public.

He could quite easily turn out to be a shining example to others, although it looks as if it will take time before this example is emulated in other unions.

Joachim Hauck

(Nürnberger Nachrichten, 1 May 1987)

A shortage of manpower in some craft industries



A few craft industries are having problems finding people for apprenticeship places — which is an oddity for the 1980s.

Some employers are having such difficulty that craft industries want to spend DM1.2m on a campaign to attract trainees.

But this does not mean that schoolboys and girls can sit back and forget any worries they may have had about their careers.

One reason for the improved situation in some areas is the fact that the young people now moving into the labour market were not born in the years with high birth rates.

Their prospects of finding a trainee place may have improved, but there is still a long way to go.

Paul Schnitker, the president of the Central Crafts Association, wants to launch a campaign to make craft apprenticeships more attractive.

The crafts have suffered a great deal from the computerisation of many fields of employment.

Today, the computer is in demand, not the bricklayer's trowel. More and more school-leavers are moving into office and administrative jobs.

This means the demand for jobs is greater than the supply.

On the other hand, the number of school-leavers with a lower secondary school-leaving certificate, the traditional labour reservoir for the crafts, is decreasing.

The new lack of apprentices, therefore, is primarily the problem of just a few craft industries.

The building industry, which is currently experiencing a business-cyclical low, has been calling for more public orders for many years.

The trainee situation is marked by extreme regional disparities.

In Baden-Württemberg, the southern parts of Bayern and Hesse there is more or less full employment in this respect.

It is in these regions that the red carpet will be rolled out for young people looking for work.

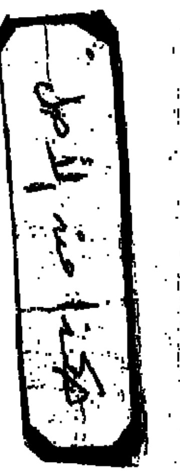
On the west coast on Schleswig-Holstein, in Bremen or in East Friesland, on the other hand, prospects are more than bleak.

The unfilled vacancies in the south of Germany are at best cold comfort for the job-seekers in the north.

Arnold Petersen

(Lubecker Nachrichten, 28 April 1987)





■ AGRICULTURE

Bonn, Moscow, sign treaty on cooperation

After long and difficult negotiations Bonn Agriculture Minister Ignaz Kiechle has signed an agreement on agricultural research cooperation with the Soviet Union.

He hopes agricultural trade between the Federal Republic and the Soviet Union will now increase in its wake.

First Deputy Secretary Murakhovsky of the Soviet Council of Ministers, who signed in Bonn as chairman of the Soviet state committee on the agro-industrial complex, called on German firms to join with Soviet enterprises in manufacturing plant protectives to help boost agricultural output.

By 1990, he said, the Soviet Union planned to boost production to meet domestic demand for foodgrain, producing 250 million tonnes of wheat, barley, rye and oats on 50 million hectares of farmland.

Last year's harvest was 210 million tonnes.

The signing of the agricultural cooperation agreement, following agreements on atomic energy and health, was a prerequisite for the framework agreement on scientific and technological cooperation coming into force.

Mr Murakhovsky said the agreement paved the way not only for cooperation in the agricultural sector; it also contributed toward intensifying economic cooperation, strengthening trade ties and promoting detente.

Herr Kiechle said a treaty basis had now been agreed for close cooperation between agricultural scientists in the two countries.

Chancellor Kohl, with whom Mr Murakhovsky conferred after signing the agreement, said it marked further progress toward consolidation of ties between Bonn and Moscow. The German government would be a reliable partner.

The agreement provides for the exchange of information and research findings, scientists and biological material and for joint research projects.

The working programme for 1987 and 1988 includes plant breeding, animal husbandry, embryo transfer and integrated plant protection.

Agricultural consequences of the Chernobyl reactor accident were mentioned by Alexander Nikonov, president of the Lenin Union Academy of Agriculture and member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

He said consideration was being given to what produce could continue to be grown in the area affected. It was, however, a small area and there had been no detrimental effect on agricultural output as a whole.

Last year agricultural output increased by eight per cent as a result of structural changes in Soviet agricultural enterprises.

In 1986 the Federal Republic imported DM81m worth of Soviet foodstuffs, mainly fish, wine, spirits and honey.

Exports to the Soviet Union totalled DM514.4m, of which wheat made up just over 58 per cent.

(Stuttgarter Zeitung, 5 May 1987)

Slack market begins hitting farm machinery makers

Agricultural investment has been hit by the depressed state of farm markets. European farmers, protected as yet by a market system of "political" prices and guaranteed sales, take a gloomy view of the future.

Not even the tallest tariff barriers and import levies provide protection now the common agricultural market is congested by its own surpluses.

It is the same tale everywhere, with surpluses weighing heavily on coffee and sugar, foodgrain and butter. Farmers worried about the outlook for agricultural earnings are bound to be less keen to invest.

The abysmal state of the US farm machinery industry is weighing more and more heavily on world markets, including Europe. Demand is on the decline everywhere.

In the wake of the farm crisis leading international companies such as International Harvester and Massey-Ferguson have gone to the wall in North America, seen from what, so far, has seemed a safe distance in Europe.

Who would have thought, a decade ago, that their demise could have been possible?

Last year the world's largest manufacturer of agricultural machinery, John Deere, reported a loss of $230m — its first since the 1930s.

In the first quarter of the current financial year further losses totalled nearly $200m.

The dimensions may not be comparable, but that cannot be said for the causes of decline. Farmers' sales difficulties have led to North American production of large-scale farm machinery, such as tractors and combine harvesters, plummeting 77 per cent from 126,000 in 1980 to 28,300 units in 1986.

Companies called in the receiver and there were mass redundancies in the industry as an inevitable result. "Not one European manufacturer would survive a similar trend here," says a leading German firm.

What is the outlook for agricultural machinery in Europe? Sales of new tractors fell from 301,000 to 247,500 — by roughly 18 per cent — between 1980 and 1985.

The industry has yet to face American conditions in the European market, but bankruptcies and closures are on the increase, especially in France.

The figures speak for themselves. A Fiat survey shows tractors sales to have fallen by nearly 13 per cent to 216,000 in 1986.

Differences vary from country to country. In Britain sales have slumped by a quarter from 25,000 to less than 19,000 in the past two years.

In France they plummeted by a third to a mere 38,000 units in the same period, while German farmers have bought only five per cent fewer tractors — 33,000 units.

"Business is slack all over the world," said Helmut Claas at the Paris farm machinery fair, "so we must be extremely careful to adjust capacity to demand and cut costs still further."

Claas, a German firm, has done so successfully. While other international firms have closed down, Claas boasts a product range half of which is only two years old.

The latest technology is bound to boost sales. While other firms announce mass redundancies and heavy losses Claas reports turnover virtually unchanged at DM1bn and manpower unchanged at over 6,000.

What is more, turnover was maintained with exports accounting for 74 per cent of sales.

The German agricultural machinery industry has so far got off lightly, with combined turnover down a mere eight per cent to DM7.4bn last year (as against a six-per-cent increase the year before).

With reference to increasing difficulties in financing Europe's common agricultural policy many observers feel the really serious problems still lie ahead for farm machinery manufacturers.

Yet some harbour vain hopes that the slump may be no more than a temporary downturn caused by "uncertainty over the continuation of European farm policy."

The opposite is true. Never has there been any greater certainty that European agriculture is in the throes of a structural crisis triggered by surplus production.

Advocates of political solutions to the problem of surplus output call to mind flights of US fancy in years gone by.

A decade ago US politicians seriously argued that American could use its "green petroleum" to exert political



pressure on Moscow by means of an embargo on foodgrain exports.

The sales problems faced by cereal farmers has put paid to this line of argument.

After the war it was widely felt in the Federal Republic that farm prices could be maintained at well above world market levels as a political price to be paid for what amounted to an insurance policy against famine.

Everyone keenly felt the need to maintain domestic food output as long as hunger was an ever-present threat. It is no longer a threat that worries the present generation.

People today are more upset by reports of powdered milk and butter being "denatured" and used as cattle fodder at the taxpayer's expense.

The farm price system has only survived because politicians are anxious not to jeopardise farmers' votes.

In American agriculture plummeting prices regulate the market. In Europe farm policymakers hope to prevent the ending of surplus production by market means with resort to stratagems and ploys of one kind and another.

French Agriculture Minister François Guillaume saw further expansion as the answer to farmers' prayers in his previous capacity as general secretary of his country's National Farmers' Union.

Stratagems and subsidies are used in bids to offload unsaleable quantities of farm produce in "grey" areas of world markets.

That is no way to solve the European Community's farm surplus problems.

In agricultural machinery new lines are developed with a view to farmers who are expected to continue to be able to pay for them.

Manufacturers planning investment in farm machinery production capacity must have some idea of the state agriculture is likely to be in.

Karl Jetter

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 30 April 1987)

■ BUSINESS

Accusations fly over lack of Munich industrial space

DIE ZEIT

Munich has a serious shortage of industrial space. Firms are having great difficulty finding locations for their factories and warehouses.

Firms that want to relocate to the city limits aren't because they can't and firms already in Munich are having trouble expanding.

Last year, the city lost 100 million marks in trade tax. Location problems are regarded as a main reason.

Bavarian Premier Franz Josef Strauss's CSU accuses Munich's Mayor, Georg Kronawitter, (SPD), of pursuing policies hostile to business, to growth and to prosperity.

Munich Social Democrats have long thought that growth must be limited. But now that trade tax revenue has indeed dropped, they are not so sure.

Another problem is that Kronawitter can no longer rely on an SPD majority. The Greens hold the balance of power in the city council and he has to govern on an ad hoc basis.

Bavarian Finance Minister Max Streibl says the city's industrial location policy is incomprehensible.

Anton Schwarz, former chief executive of Löwenbräu, a leading Munich brewery, says it is alarming that no-one seems interested any more in safeguarding jobs, let alone in creating jobs.

He spent years in a desperate but fruitless search for a new location in the city. After two projects were vetoed by the city and by regional planners, Löwenbräu shelved urgently needed investment.

Is the Bavarian capital busy discouraging local industry by blocking expansion and relocation plans other cities would welcome with open arms?

The Munich chamber of commerce and industry is worried that it may not be long before the city imposes a total ban on further expansion.

Are these fears justified? Over 500 companies of all kinds have applied to the city's economic affairs department for help in relocating.

Their expansion plans provide for 260 hectares of new building after which, they say, they will increase their combined payroll from 22,500 to over 37,000.

The economic affairs department takes these figures with a pinch of salt, saying that in many cases they are optimistic.

Yet the fact remains that since 1983 the demand for industrial expansion acreage has more than doubled, with large companies leading the hunt.

In four out of five cases they plan to relocate wholly or partly within Munich, partly in order to expand and partly due to environmental problems at their present location.

Only 10 per cent of applicants propose to relocate in Munich from outside the city.

Not long ago Kronawitter seemed unperturbed by long-established Munich firms' plans to relocate outside the city. That, he said, could only ease the burden on the Munich conurbation, which was not a bad idea.

"I don't feel it would be a disaster if Siemens, for instance, were to expand in (neighbouring) Poing or Oberschleissheim," said Uli Zech, Munich's building and public works commissioner.

Times have changed. Trade tax revenue has declined substantially since last summer, unexpectedly leaving the city DM100m out of pocket.

Finance commissioner Dieter Grundmann has been left with no choice but to cut costs and has cancelled an initial DM40m in administrative expenditure.

Warning voices are now being taken seriously. The CSU's Winfried Zehetmeier is one who feels there is a risk of municipal officials growing too complacent and expecting newcomers to continue coming of their own accord.

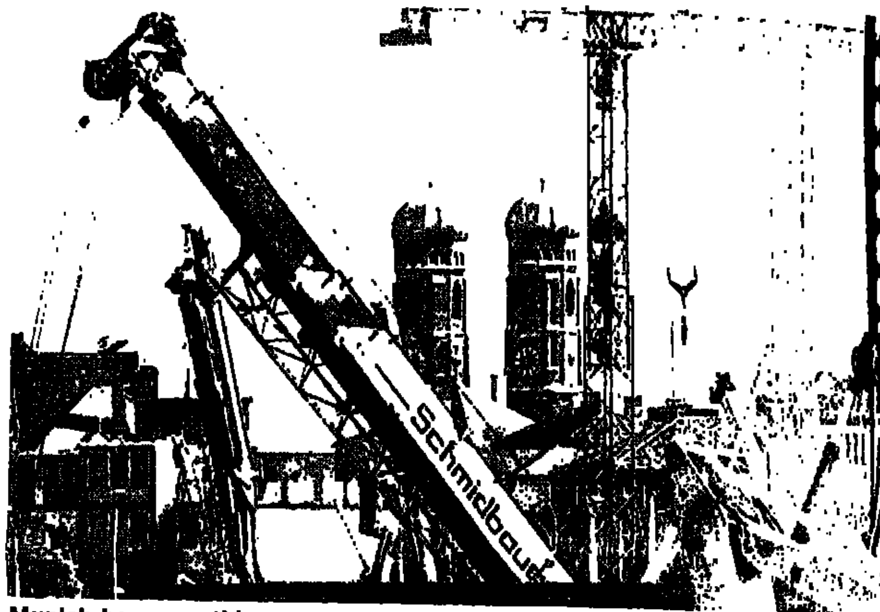
The decision by Gutehoffnungshütte, the "flagship of Ruhr industry," to quote Herr Streibl, to transfer its head office from Oberhausen to Munich after its merger with MAN made headline news.

As Munich has no shortage of prestige office blocks, the 200 head office staff were soon rehoused. But trouble arose when an engineering subsidiary planned to expand its works capacity in a Munich suburb.

MAN Technologie GmbH applied for planning permission to build a new hall in which to manufacture missile components for the European Ariane programme. The authorities were not keen.

The trade tax shortfall has yet to reach dramatic proportions. The city merely miscalculated revenue from two large trade tax-payers.

Herr Grundmann of the CSU is at pains to insist that there is no need to infer from the shortfall that a general economic decline has set in.


Munich has everything — except factory space. (Photo: AP)

That is not to say that risks of lower tax revenue can be ruled out. If individual instances can make such a difference, a general downturn must inevitably be much more drastic.

Former mayor Helmut Gittel, now a CSU councillor, has long warned of the financial risks this cavalier attitude toward business interests entails. "In 10 to 20 years," he says, "it will make its mark on trade tax revenue."

The situation has taken a decided turn for the worse since CSU Mayor Erich Kiesl was outsted in 1984 and replaced by his predecessor, Herr Kronawitter, and a council in which no party has a clear majority and the mayor has had to govern on the basis of ad hoc majorities.

Munich seems to be less and less appreciative of the interests of the business community.

New industrial land could hardly be scarcer. Neighbouring local authorities are strongly opposed to the city's industrial expansion plans and will hear nothing of industrial sites or estates on its outskirts.

Herr Zehetmeier feels the damage was done in the 1960s when Mayor Hans-Jochen Vogel, now SPD leader in the Bonn Bundestag, felt demarcation between the city and neighbouring areas was a minor matter.

Munich emerged empty-handed from local government reforms in the 1970s whereas other Bavarian towns took over substantial surrounding areas, enabling them to expand.

The opportunity of adjusting the Bavarian capital to meet the requirements of a growing industrial city was, he says, missed.

Even so, Munich airport is likely to be transferred from Riem to Erding by 1991, which should help to ease the burden.

For some time planners of all party political persuasions have cast covetous glances at the 400 acres in Riem that will then be available for redevelopment and should provide the city with a breathing-space.

The initial plan was to allocate equal shares of the Riem airport site to industry, housing and parks and gardens. Then, just over a year ago, the Munich trade fair authority staked its claim.

As the existing trade fair grounds

Continued on page 9

City centres hit back in battle for retail sales

Handelsblatt
WIRTSCHAFTS- UND FINANZZEITUNG

The average German spends 9,000 marks a year at retail outlets, including the cost of fuel and running a car.

There are 339,000 retail traders in the country. How much of this trade each captures depends to a large extent on location.

There is no absolute rule on location but, as a rule, the further a shop is from the public, the greater the effort needed to persuade a shopper to come and buy.

A back-yard discount trader on an industrial estate must sell cheaply enough to make driving there worthwhile.

But most retailers agree that a single shop standing on its own can't attract enough custom. Shopping centres can.

City centres have traditionally been the most popular retail market place. But growing traffic density made city-centre shopping increasingly difficult — certainly for motorists.

Despite having to drive further, motorised shoppers have increasingly come to shop at inexpensive self-service hypermarkets because parking is so easy.

City centres are still shopping centres — largely due to the strenuous efforts of city-centre traders, especially department stores, to maintain turnover.

A growing number of local politicians have also come to appreciate the importance of keeping city-centre shopping facilities profitable, but in many cases their efforts carry little conviction.

They consist of bids to prevent planning permission for large retail outlets at new, "non-integrated" locations.

In some cases there have even been calls for limits to or a ban on new shops. But these moves are of no immediate assistance to city-centre and other established shopping areas.

They are merely attempts to stem the tide of new shops and supermarkets. From this approach it is but a short step toward planning demand and investment controls.

So the German Retail Traders' Association (HDE) is right in fearing that this approach might nip in the bud the dynamism on which trade depends.

Planning controls and construction bans might merely impede desirable competition and do the consumer lasting damage.

A more difficult but more effective approach is to adopt transport policies that relieve city-centre congestion — and not a ban on motoring that will merely keep customers out.

More parking lots must be provided — underground car parks if need be. Attractive city-centre shopping locations must be expanded to include side streets. This would both increase sales footage and help to keep rents down.

Public transport could also be improved in many places, both in comfort and in frequency of services. More passengers, once attracted, might well reduce public transport authorities' operational losses.

Last but not least, longer opening hours are widely expected to give city-centre shopping areas an extra boost. Livelier city centres in the evening are definitely more attractive than a hypermarket on the outskirts of town.

All concerned must join forces to ensure the target is achieved. Architects and property owners (or companies) must help to make city-centre shopping more attractive.

Restaurants must be made more inviting. Shop assistants must be friendlier. Shop-window decorations must be more eye-catching.

The range of goods and services provided must be extended and made more attractive than out-of-town shopping.

The imminent demise of city centres has been forecast so often and for so long that their survival can be confidently predicted.

They can even stage a comeback if everyone lends a hand.

Werner Osel

(Handelsblatt, Düsseldorf, 27 April 1987)

■ AVIATION

50 years since the airship era ended in inferno

Fifty years ago the airship era came to an end when the LZ 129 Hindenburg went up in flames on 6 May 1937 at Lakehurst, in New Jersey.

The conflagration was fuelled by 200,000 cubic metres of hydrogen. Thirty-six people died.

Airships in Germany, USA and Britain were mothballed and development plans shelved.

Since the Second World War there have been attempts to revive Graf von Zeppelin's idea. But all have fallen flat either on economic grounds or because of prejudice against them.

In February 1940 Hitler's Aviation Minister, Hermann Göring, ordered the scrapping of Germany's last serviceable airship, the LZ 130. This released a storm of protest from airship aviators.

The LZ 130, Hindenburg's sistership, had only made exhibition and training flights after it went into service on 14 September 1938.

Göring, a devotee of fighter aircraft, had no time for the "gas bags."

Because the airship aviators refused to break-up the LZ 130 the Ministry ordered an engineer battalion to do the

RHEINISCHE POST

job. Pioneers blew up the airship sheds at the Rhine-Main airport.

In Friedrichshafen the keel of the LZ 131 had been laid. No more than a few rings of its aluminium skeleton had been put in place.

Then on the night of 22 June 1943 a squadron of British bombers destroyed the airship building yards on Lake Constance.

A few years after the war the Luftschiffbau-Zeppelin Friedrichshafen company began working on plans to build a modern airship. It was to be larger than all previous airships, capable of transporting 100 passengers on routes to North and South America.

An air-cargo version, capable of lifting 67 tons, was also being considered. In 1957 it was calculated that its cost would be about DM61m.

Until his death the driving force behind this scheme was the last commander of the Hindenburg, Max Pruss — he was one of the few to survive the Lakehurst disaster.

Many major firms were involved in the airship project — Bayer, BASF, Daimler-Benz and Shell.

But the plans were put aside because of cheap oil prices in 1957. Jets were regarded as the aircraft of the future.

At the beginning Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin favoured the rigid airship. By the turn of the century some designers were giving their attention to semi-rigid or non-rigid airships, particularly August von Parseval.

He was commissioned by the Prussian War Ministry to experiment with a cylindrical, collapsible missile.

Parseval's inventiveness eventually proved to be his undoing. He put in the air a guided, motor-powered billowing airship. But the cotton-sheet covering that had been pasted on the frame proved to be unsuitable material.

Furthermore Zeppelin's "flying bed-roll" provided to be much more manoeuvrable.

Technology was not the only deciding factor in the race between Zeppelin and Parseval; the "goodwill of the people" came into it.

When Zeppelin's fourth airship version went up in flames near Echterdingen in 1908, a national campaign for donations saved the Count from bankruptcy. Industrialists dug deep into their bank accounts, children raided their piggy banks for the Count.

Within six weeks six million marks had been raised. This was more than the grand old pioneer of airships, who had had his fair share of disasters, had expected.

With the donations new building sheds were put up on the Riedlewiese at Friedrichshafen and the Count put aside three million marks to set up the Deutscher Luftschiffahrts-Aktiengesellschaft (DELAG) in Frankfurt.

Heracles' comment that "war is the father of all things" proved its validity for the further development of airships during the First World War, 1914 to 1918.

In Britain, France and the German empire the military put their energies into building up a fleet of airships.

At the beginning of the war the Imperial Navy possessed a single airship, but 78 airships were put into operation up until 1917, ordered by the Admiralty, one technically more sophisticated than the next.

They were used as escorts across the North Sea, as bombers and as launching bases for flying torpedoes. But airships were not decisive in the war for either side.

Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin did not live long enough to know of the military flights of his Zeppelins or of the Scapa Flow surrender.

He was a former cavalry general and it was not until he was 52 that he began to develop airships. He died, aged 79, in Berlin on 8 March 1917.

Twenty years after his death "Black Friday" in airship history took place in New Jersey.

After any number of successful crossings of the Atlantic the DELAG flagship, the 248-metre long Hindenburg exploded at the mooring mast at Lakehurst.

Captain Hans von Schiller, commander of "Graf Zeppelin I," that was on that day returning from Rio de Janeiro, wrote in his book *Zeppelin*: "We were passing the Cape Verde Islands when we received the last message from the Hindenburg, on the evening of 6 May. 'arr. lakehurst,' which meant that the airship was at the mooring mast."

He continued: "The next morning, when I sat at breakfast in the salon, I saw the radio officer cautiously open the door. He signalled to me to come out quickly. I followed him to the radio room. He was chalk-white and obviously disturbed. He handed me a radio signal. It was an inquiry from Rio to the radio station at Quickborn, near Hamburg.

"It read: 'havas report that airship hindenburg exploded lakehurst. all passengers and crew dead. request information about hindeburg for considerable press pressure. syncondor rio'."

Schiller's first reaction was that the radio signal of the catastrophe must be a false alarm. He said: "We had had our fair share of false alarms. We had one, for example, that the Graf Zeppelin had come down in the sea."

Then the reply came from Quickborn to Rio. "unfortunately hindenburg report confirmed."

Professor Mark Heald of Princeton University, an eye-witness of the disaster, was standing with his wife and son at the edge of the Lakehurst airfield on 6 May 1937 when the Hindenburg was nudging towards the mooring mast and the bow line had been thrown out.

Heald said: "At the same moment I saw a pale blue flame that perhaps burst out from the last third of the Zeppelin towards the stern."

Before Heald could point this out to his wife there was an explosive outburst of gas that in seconds engulfed the stern in a gigantic ball of fire.

The airship sank down backwards as it touched the earth. A tongue of flame shot out of the bow. The courage of the personnel on the ground and the surviving members of the crew prevented more passengers being killed by the inferno than were.

Time and time again some of them dashed into the burning wreck to look for the injured and people who were trapped.

In the year it had been operating in the trans-Atlantic service LZ 129 Hindenburg had carried 1,042 passengers.

The crossing took about 60 hours. The airship could carry a maximum of 72 passengers in far more comfort conditions than passengers enjoy in the jumbo jets of today.

Passengers dined off white porcelain, specially designed for the hindenburg, at individual tables covered with white table-clothes.

The airship's famous Blüthner pianoforte, a special 390-pound weight instrument made of aluminium, stood in the main salon whose walls were decorated with a Mercator world map.

At the bar the barman mixed the famous cocktail, "LZ 129 iced" and "Maybach 12." The smoking room, the writing and reading rooms, the cabins and the promenade deck were all done

Continued on page 10


Lakehurst, New Jersey, 3 May 1937: the cause of the fire has never been established. (Photo: dpa)

Continued from page 8

have no further scope for expansion the management feel a swift decision on an alternative location for the 1990s is urgently needed.

In their quest for an alternative site they too have shown keen interest in Riem. They would like to take over 80 hectares of the site.

Building land in Munich is so expensive that newcomers are at a serious disadvantage and might well feel they have no choice but to try somewhere less expensive.

Little or no land is available in the city for less than DM600-DM1,000 per square metre, and Herr Zehetmeier feels selling land to large firms at bargain basement prices is unrealistic.

In Regensburg BMW was able to buy the site for its new works for DM19.50 per square metre.

Herr Zehetmeier has no illusions that this kind of incentive is politically feasible in Munich. He advocates a selective approach.

Firms with a high research and development potential (or the R&D divisions of leading companies) ought to be encouraged to locate in Munich as a university and an economic centre. Mere manufacturing facilities should be left to locate nearby.

This is the approach adopted by Siemens, the electrical engineering giant, which already has a payroll of over 50,000 in the city.

The city-centre head office is to be enlarged by the construction of a further office block, but new production facilities are to be located in neighbouring areas.

At present most firms are reluctant to leave Munich, the high tech paradise, even if they are short of space.

Merk Telefonbau GmbH hit the headlines over two years ago by deciding to relocate lock, stock and barrel in Feldkirchen. Suddenly this spring it was announced that the company was to stay put.

Bosch of Stuttgart, the new owner of Telenorma, of which Merk is a subsidiary, decided not to sacrifice such an attractive location as Munich.

The city, greatly relieved, is now trying to find Merk room to expand.

Many well-known Munich firms are in the same position.

They can no longer make do with their present location.

If Munich is to retain its attraction as a city of modern, innovative, "smokeless" industry and to ensure its finances for the foreseeable future it can no longer afford to treat industrial location so cavalierly.

Hermann Bössenecker

(Die Zeit, Hamburg, 24 April 1987)



■ THE ARTS

200 years since the birth of the 'first German poet of the present'



Ludwig Uhland . . . schoolboys curse his ballads. (Photo: Historia)

Two hundred years ago, on 26 April 1787, poet Ludwig Uhland was born in Tübingen.

The influences of his work have been as diverse as the opinions held of him. Heinrich Heine mocked his "meek squires and chaste noblewomen" and "family vaults loaded with foreboding."

Christian Friedrich Hebbel honoured him as the "first German poet of the present," and even Goethe found words of praise for him.

The great poet approved of his ballads in which he "became aware of an excellent talent and saw clearly that there were grounds for his fame."

His ballads, the curse of schoolboys' lives, were learned by heart in school. Many of his poems, such as "Ich hatt einen Kameraden," found a place in cultural history and a wider audience when set to music by great composers, in this instance Schubert.

Little is heard of Uhland these days. In the Third Reich, he was held up as a sort of figurehead of national arrogance. This has created about him an air of suspicion even so long after his time.

It is unfair to throw him on the ideological rubbish heap just as much as it is unfair to disregard him as a past nationalist.

Literary history has a hard time putting Uhland into a period. He was born a year before Josef von Eichendorf. His dates would make him a Late Romantic.

But Uhland and his poet friends such as Justinus Kerner, Karl Meyer and Gustav Schwab, were deeply influenced by the Heidelberg Romantics such as Clemens Brentano and Ludwig von Arnim.

With Justinus Kerner he was the centre of the famous circle *Der Schwäbische Dichterkreis.*

Without the "Des Knaben Wunderhorn" collection Uhland's lyrics would be unthinkable with their sleekness, sweetness of tone and folk-song characteristics.

On the other hand most of his poetry lacks the utopian vitality of his predecessors.

The Middle Ages, that Uhland conjured up, threatens to become petrified as just historical decoration.

The mannered medieval "Golden days" offer no pledge of future renewal but only a kind of patriarchal nostalgia.

Uhland's Romanticism was already looking towards the Biedemeier movement.

Uhland was not only a poet, but also an academic and a politician. Prominence is given to this because these three aspects of his character refer to one another.

Between 1805 and 1808 Uhland reluctantly, and only at the behest of his father, studied law at Tübingen University, graduating in law in 1810. At the same time his first poems were published.

He went on an educational journey to Paris where he studied medieval French literature until 1811.

Later he was to return to medieval forms of French and German literature, to research and sagas.

Uhland published the results of his reseach in many volumes, in his *Schwäbische Sagenkunde,* and books about Old High and Low German folk songs, books on *Mythus von Thor* and Walter von der Vogelweide, whose poems he translated.

In 1812 Uhland entered the Württemberg interior ministry in Stuttgart as a secretary. As he was not called on to do much he opened a lawyer's office there.

He was not untouched by the rejoicing over the War of Independence against Napoleon.

He composed patriotic lyrics and in 1815 his first collection of poems appeared, that immediately became a great success.

In the previous year what was to become his most famous ballad appeared, *Des Sängers Fluch,* which placed his poetry in a definite position in literary history.

The character of the *Sänger,* who appeared as an abstract figure in many of Uhland's later works, refers to the Orpheus myth, so central to Weimar classicism.

Schiller's *Ästhetische Briefe,* in which the dramatist claimed that the quality of the individual was the only guarantee of the quality of any social structure to come, was regarded by Uhland with brusque pessimism.

The various aspects of Uhland's personality can be ideally observed in his historical ballads — he preferred to draw on Württemberg history for his sources.

He gave of his best in them, not in his historical dramas that have long been forgotten: ballads such as *Graf Eberhard der Rauschebart, Schwäbische Kunde* and *Der Überfall im Wildbad.*

These did not include the sabre-rattling attitudes of his later heroic ballads. They included, as Walter Hinck said, "the pleasant and humorous."

Uhland the politician emerged in 1816. In many poems he expressed his disappointment that the German princes had gone back on their promises for a constitution.

Uhland joined the opposition when the Württemberg state parliament was dissolved in 1817 because the parliament would not accept the constitutional proposals made by the king.

Uhland believed that the constitution should be an agreement freely made between the people and the throne, not a gift from the king. He represented the Tübingen constituency in the state parliament from 1920 onwards. He was made Professor of German Lanugage and Literature at Tübingen University, in the face of government opposition. The liberal-minded Uhland was out of favour in official quarters. Uhland's poetic inspiration probably dried up in 1819 when the spring of political hopes came to nothing with the winter of Metternich's restoration. Only in 1829 and 1834 were there any significant number of poems written. He resigned his professorship in 1832 when the government refused to give him leave of absence as a newly-elected member of the state parliament. He was not prepared to compromise. In 1848/

Continued on page 11

Honour for satirist

Dieter Hildebrandt (right) satirist, comedian, actor and author, has been awarded the Schiller Prize, worth 25,000 marks, by the City of Mannheim. The prize, named after poet, dramatist and historian Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805) is awarded to people in the arts who have helped expose social justice and misuse of power. Hildebrandt has made a reputation as a cabaret satirist. In awarding the prize, the mayor of Mannheim, Gerhard Widder (left), said he has let society look at itself in the mirror and recognise dangers which confronted it. (Photo: Bohnert-Neusch)

Top literary prize awarded



Erich Fried . . . uses clear language. (Photo: Brigitte Fr...)

The decision by the German Academy for Language and Literature to award the Georg Büchner Prize to the Austrian-born poet and translator Erich Fried honours a writer whose work is a unique appeal against comfortable social and political adjustment by the individual.

In one of his poems he wrote: "I'll not get used to breaking habits."

The prize is the most important literary award in the Federal Republic and carries with it a cheque for DM30,000

Fried was born in Vienna in 1921 and now lives in London, where he works for the BBC.

His sufferings during the Third Reich (his father was murdered by the Gestapo) have had a lasting effect on his work.

He has constantly kept his distance from what Heinrich Böll called the silent majority.

Fried has been more consistent than many of his colleagues who, after the war, sought the way out of the hermitage of poetical inwardness through social and political involvement.

Fried took up the cudgels with "the cares of the real world" in his unembellished, clear language.

The jury made the award for his enlightening powers with words. *His work* shows a self-conscious sense of the magic and mystery of words, especially of verbal affinities (puns even), which he has explored to find real links between things and reach a style to overcome the sense of "hopelessness."

The jury also made the award for his Shakespeare translations in which he has discovered "unusual ways for language."

Wolfgang Platzeck

(Westdeutsche Allgemeine, Essen, 1 May 1987)

Continued from page 9

out with the same luxury. All this went up in flames in a few minutes at Lakehurst. All that remained was a twisted charred skeleton over which US soldiers mounted a funeral guard during the mourning ceremonies.

It was never discovered what had actually caused the accident. There was much speculation, including the theory that the disaster was the result of a bomb attack.

Airship passenger services were discontinued as a result of the catastrophe — temporarily, as it was announced in 1937, for all time, as the history of aviation has shown up to 1987.

Volker Füssmann

(Rheinische Post, Düsseldorf, 2 May 1987)

■ THE ARTS

Ballet makes a point about Tennessee Williams

Bremer Nachrichten

Many arguments can be advanced against playwright Tennessee Williams, particularly the Williams of the last years of his life, but one thing is certain: he knew how to write for actors.

He could create characters true to life; he could make them come to life and give them a background, a past, a past that was all too often sick.

But could he write for the ballet? John Neumeier answered this question with an unequivocal Yes and went ahead to create a ballet of *A Streetcar named Desire,* that was premièred in Stuttgart three years ago with Marcia Haydée and Richard Cragun in the main roles.

Alfred Schnittke was unable to complete the score for a Peer Gynt ballet because of illness, so Neumeier put on his version of *Streetcar* for Hamburg's 13th Ballet Festival at the Staatsoper. He took care of the décor, costumes and lighting himself.

In Williams' play Blanche du Bois bursts into the lives of her sister and brother-in-law and uproots their banal everyday existence.

What had happened to her before she descended on her relatives is revealed by the stories she tells, mainly lies.

But it is hard to dance the past so Neumeier turned to one of his favourite devices, the flash-back.

Right at the very beginning of the ballet Blanche is being taken off to the madhouse. She rubs her wrists still able to feel the pressure of the straitjacket. She drags out of her suitcase her tarty clothes, makes film-star-like poses and is threatened sexually by shapes that psychically unbalance her, the woman with a lust for life.

She recalls her marriage in the hall of the Villa Bella Reve. She recalls the storm of the declaration of Allan Gray's love, despite an homosexual relationship, that ends after horrific rowing with a shot-gun killing

This conflict cries out for sophisticated choreography for the soloists and even more for deep dramatic or psychological pas de deux for the lovers of both sexes.

The wedding guests in white and pink or the dying, or already dead, relations in black create here merely an empty show, dispelled by Stella's serenity. She then catches the bridal bouquet.

Neumeier sets this festive scene that ends so tragically to a tape-recording of Prokofiev's *Visions fugitives* with Richard Hoynes (live) on the piano.

Neumeier creates through gentle, often retarded movements, a dreamy atmosphere right up to the collapse of the villa resulting in Blanche going off the rails.

The second part begins with Schnittke's first symphony, loud and gripping. The dancing is astounding, excessive, a "sex act" between Stella and her husband, Stanley Kowalski, an amateur boxer who has more physical power than he knows what to do with.

Blanche, who has fled to her sister's, goes to a boxing match in which Stanley is fighting with Mitch. He shyly pays his court to her.

Neumeier avoids the danger of producing just a ballet in minature from such a group of characters with a fantastic idea.

He puts New Orleans on the stage, represented by male and female dancers, untamed, pittoresque, lively, egocentric people who give Blanche no peace with their curiosity and their search for pleasure, although in fact Blanche does not want peace.

She tries out her seductive arts on the newspaper boy, but only Mitch can help her with his patience, unflappability and devotion.

Kowalski exposes his unloved sister-in-law, bringing in Blanche's "clients" from the dosshouse "Hotel Flamingo."

Mitch is in despair, but Stanley goes further. He rapes Blanche.

This wild, brutal pas de deux of lust and defence without hibitions, with rough movements, raving, shocking, does not have its equal anywhere else in ballet.



Power and a dreamy atmosphere . . . Neumeier's *Streetcar.* (Photo: Peter Peitsch)

After this excess Kowalski lets them take Blanche off to the asylum, despite Stella's protests, Blanche haunted by the images of the past.

This is a narrative ballet with a strong story-line but without any ungainly pantomime elements. It is full of psychological detail, which Neumeier demonstrates in his choreography, movements that are explicit, pas de deux and ensemble pieces that explain relationships exactly.

He fans emotions that make up for what is lost of the literary element of the production.

Colleen Scott dances the unstable Blanche not only with technical perfection but with an intensity of feeling. Her Blanche is balancing on the precipice of sanity, she is anxious, almost hysterical, before the threat of the Furies.

Ivan Liska, usually a noble, chivalrous character, convincingly shows the other side of his talent. He is sporty, sexy and brutal. He gives a magnificent performance.

Bettina Beckmann as Stella shows a bright, happy temperament.

Stephan Pier is at first the shy, ecstatic, despairing Mitch, and Johannes Kritzinger dances the intense but easily manageable Allan Gray.

Jean Laban dances Gray's seducable friend, the relationship that brings Blanche down.

The performance was received with much applause for the youthful ensemble and, of course, for John Neumeier.

Simon Neubauer

(Bremer Nachrichten, 6 May 1987)

Continued from page 10

1849 he was a member of the Frankfurt National Assembly. He voted here mainly with the *großdeutsch* party, that called for a united Germany including the whole of the Austrian empire as opposed to the *kleindeutsch* faction, that wanted to exclude even the German parts of the Austrian empire. After the failure of the 1848 Movement he was a leading member of the *Rumpfparliament.*

When this parliament moved its seat to Stuttgart, he headed protest marches that were dispersed by the royal Württemberg cavalry.

He retired and spent the rest of his days in Tübingen where he died in 1892. Even before 1848 politician and poet Uhland's attitudes were linked to liberalism and nationalism.

After 1848 nationalism disastrously rid itself of its liberal basis. Although Uhland is held in high esteem his uncompromising attitudes eventually came to nothing.

This speaks against his narrow-minded, inferior imitators although not against Uhland himself. But he remains, as a poet, of secondary importance.

He was uncompromising but he can be held up today as a model of democratic thinking.

Markus Schwering

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 24 April 1987)

***Cats* is clawing all the way to the bank.** (Photo: Ralf Brinkhoff)

German version of 'Cats' races into profit in under a year

More than half a million people have seen Andrew Lloyd Webber's international musical success, *Cats,* in its first year in Hamburg.

There were doubts that this first-ever musical in Germany run entirely on commercial lines would be a success. But it has. Producer Friedrich Kurz now expects the show to run for five years.

The Bundesbahn has even become involved. Special package-deals with a ticket for the show included have been luring people to Hamburg in droves.

The 11th of January was a milestone for the investors who each put up DM350,000. On that day production costs were covered. Now it's all profit.

In the first nine months, takings were DM8.5 million. The management is being coy about precise profit figures. But income at the rate of DM8.5 million in nine months equals about one million marks a month.

Cats press spokeswoman Edda Fels said: "The investors are indeed now making a profit but there are still risks."

The investors, who have remained anonymous, could easily have lost their money. Tickets are relatively expensive. The cheapest is a family ticket for a Sunday matinée. The dearest ticket costs DM100 at the weekend.

Nevertheless this perfectly staged show is attracting the public. The production management claim that the



house is 97 per cent full for each performance — the Operettenhaus has 1,100 seats.

Grizabella and her colleagues — the charming Rum Tum Tugger, wise Old Deuterponomy, dangerous Macavity and the magical Mr Mistoffelees — will continue to hold the stage for a few more years.

A new cast has taken over the production. The new members of the ensemble were introduced to the public at a press conference in Hamburg.

Grizabella will be played by French artiste Christine Lariche, who has until now appeared in nightclubs and cabaret.

The new Rum Tum Tugger, the darling of the public, will be danced and sung by Paul Kribbe from Holland.

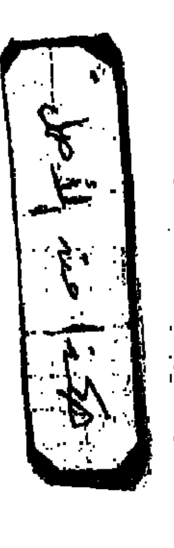
He has appeared many times on Dutch television and has gained a lot of experience in another musical as a singer and dancer.

Cats is based on T.S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats.*

The musical has been playing to full houses in London since it opened in 1981.

Eckart Glenke

(Nordwest Zeitung, Oldenburg, 30 April 1987)



■ THE ENVIRONMENT

Success with efforts to slow rate of pesticide loss into ecosystem

Scientists have been trying for decades to reduce the amount of chemicals used on farms from getting into the ecosystem.

One promising line of research is controlled release techniques. These are claimed to spread the release over long periods.

Staff at the Radiation and Environmental Research Establishment (GSF) in Neuherberg, near Munich, now report encouraging test results for a plastic foil system.

Manufacturing foil from mass-produced synthetics such as high-pressure polyethylene and ethylene vinyl acetate presents no fundamental problems.

The chemical agent, in crystalline or liquid form and usually amounting to only a few per cent of the total quantity, is simply mixed with the granulated plastic raw material.

Admixtures provide shade or extra density. The granule mixture is then extruded or converted into strip or sheeting at temperatures of between 140° and 160° C.

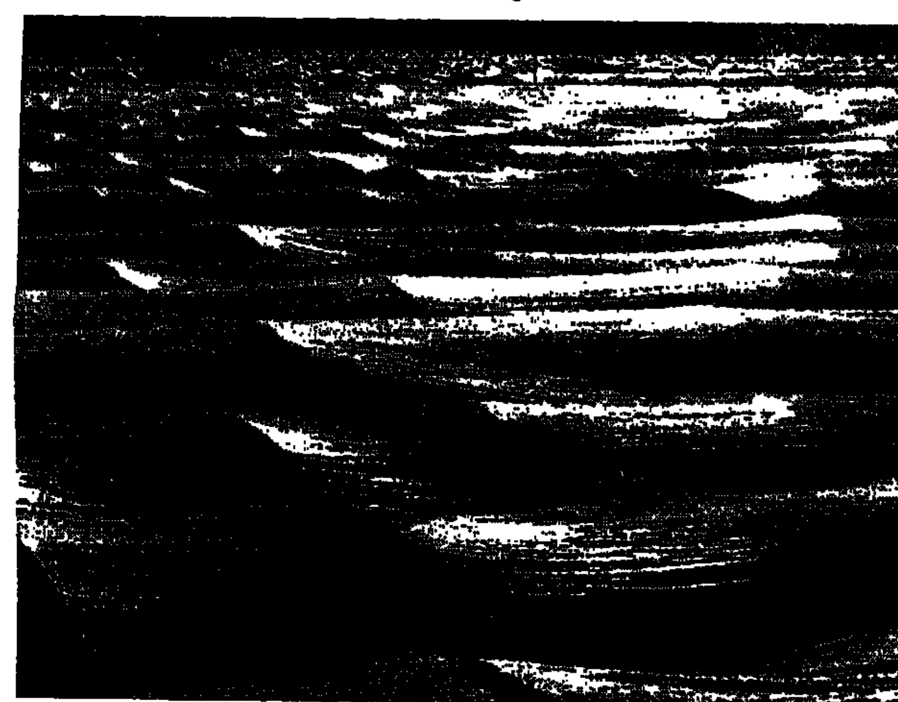
This thin plastic sheeting can be used where foil is already widely used by farmers, especially in temperate zones such, in the Federal Republic, as the Rhineland.

Soil covered in plastic sheeting can be kept at temperatures up to 8° C higher than the surroundings, so spring vegetables can be sown a month or two earlier.

Conventional plastic foil is replaced by the pesticide-enriched variety, the pesticide depending on the plant and location.

If the protective function is all that is required the foil can first be spread, with plants being sown later.

The pesticide molecules, held loosely in place by the chain network of plastic molecules, evaporate into the surroundings. The speed at which they evaporate depends on the concentration of pesticide molecules released in the immediate vicinity of the foil.



Foiled by plastic . . . sunset on a protected ecosystem. (Photo: dpa)

The plastic sheeting is often covered in condensation on the side facing the soil, which is most convenient. The chemical transition takes place much faster in water than in air.

Most of the agent is released on the soil side of the sheeting. Losses due to evaporation into the atmosphere are extremely low.

In an initial programme of experiments staff at the GSF's institute of ecological chemistry tested 11 insecticides, 16 weedkillers and two fungicides for suitability.

Radioactive tracers showed the controlled release to correspond most satisfactorily to theoretical estimates. The Bavarian scientists feel sure the evaporation behaviour of other pesticides can be similarly estimated in advance.

Experiments with specific crops have yielded varied results yet indicated new uses. Tests of herbicide foil with white cabbage, maize and celeriac have been found to reduce the quantities of herbicide used by up to 50 or even 60 per cent.

Trials were carried out for three years at Weihenstephan, Bavaria, and in some cases there was no saving whatever.

In more arid zones, however, where plastic foil is used mainly to save water, the use of pesticide-enriched foil can be expected to prove most beneficial.

This is particularly so in that many developing countries lack the infrastructure required for conventional, repeated spreading or spraying of weedkillers or pesticides.

If they have to spread or spray once only a considerable surplus — from the higher dose — is sure to remain unused, much to the detriment of the environment.

If pesticide foil is used instead, the chemical agent is gradually, evenly released from its plastic base for weeks or months and can thus be put to the best possible use.

These German trials, which are partly financed by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, have revealed other interesting uses.

In waterlogged paddy fields submerged pesticide strip has been found to keep weeds largely at bay. Yet water



pollution is so low that fish farming is unaffected.

In another series of experiments insecticide strip in the root zone of corn plants was found to keep greenfly largely at bay.

Depot foil could also prove most important as a health precaution in the Third World. It could be impregnated with lure aroma and contact toxin to attract and kill tsetse flies, for instance.

Further research is needed in this and other sectors, but large-scale manufacture of pesticide plastic foil is shortly to begin in the Federal Republic.

Plastic sheeting is to be used in large-scale trials to show whether the new system really works in agricultural practice.

Dietrich Zimmermann

(Die Welt, Bonn, 7 May 1987)

Lead-free fuel for all motors claimed

Deutsche Shell has developed a motor fuel additive that enables engines designed to run on leaded petrol to run on unleaded.

The use of this additive means that all petrol-engined vehicles except sports cars that run only on 98-octane super grade fuel can now switch to unleaded petrol.

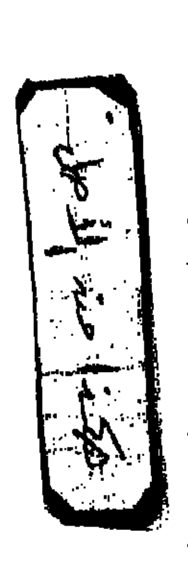
The additive uses an organic potassium compound instead of the lead that is being phased out because it is regarded as environmentally dangerous.

It is said both to ensure valve lubrication and to improve ignition and combustion.

The additive cannot be marketed in the Federal Republic until regulations have been revised, but that could be done once it has passed all its tests.

Shell are confident the legal arrangements can be made without delay.

(Frankfurter Neue Presse, 30 April 1987)



Ozone layer crisis: agreement on spraycan-gas production

World production of halogen-based spraycan gases that destroy the ozone layer in the upper atmosphere causing the increase in temperature known as the hothouse effect is to be halved by international agreement — but not before the turn of the century.

An agreement drafted in Geneva by 31 UN member-countries is to be signed in Montreal in September.

The halogen compounds of which production is to be curbed are used as spray gas, in synthetics manufacture, in air conditioning and as a solvent.

Parliamentary state secretary Martin Grüner of the Environment Ministry told journalists in Bonn the Geneva draft was to be signed at an international conference to be held in Montreal from 14 to 16 September.

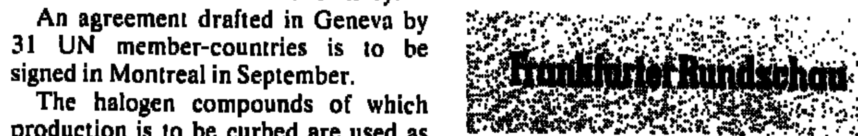
In addition to the agreement the Bonn government planned to negotiate with German industry on voluntary restraint in production of the gas to reduce output faster.

Outlining the draft agreed in Geneva at the end of April, Herr Grüner said the convention to protect the ozone layer would come into force by 1989 or 1990 at the latest.

Two years later, production of spray gas is to be frozen at the 1986 level. Two years later still, or by 1994 at the latest, production and imports are to be reduced by 20 per cent.

A further, 30-per-cent reduction is to be undertaken six or eight years later, in 2000 or 2002.

The exact deadline, six or eight years,



was left open in Geneva. The Bonn government would sooner see the earlier deadline agreed.

The European Commission, he said, had endorsed the 50-per-cent cut in Geneva.

At the 19 March meeting of the Council of Environment Ministers agreement was reached on only a 20-per-cent cut.

Britain was particularly reluctant to support a 50-per-cent cut and unwilling to consider more than 20 per cent.

The medium-term 50-per-cent cut provisionally agreed in Geneva was, Herr Grüner felt, in keeping with Chancellor Kohl's 18 March government policy statement to the Bundestag.

A ban on halogen-based spray gas as promised in the policy statement would account for about 50 per cent of production.

A working party at the Environmental Protection Agency in Berlin, which is attached to the Environment Ministry in Bonn, had been entrusted with discussing voluntary restraint in production and use of spray gas with manufacturers and users.

Herr Grüner hoped the working party would be able to submit results later this year.

Between 1976 and 1985, he said the use of halogen-based spray gas had been reduced by one third, but overall consumption had increased slightly due to extra use in other sectors.

At present 50 per cent of production is used as spray gas, 33 per cent in foam synthetics, 11 per cent in air conditioning and six per cent as a solvent.

Herr Grüner recalled US difficulties in reducing consumption of the gas, the use of which in spraycans has been banned in the United States since 1978.

But its use is still permitted in the United States to foam synthetics and in coolant systems.

Ministry experts were not prepared to voice an opinion on whether spray gas was to blame for the ozone hole over the Antarctic. Definite scientific proof was not available.

But the gas was definitely one of the most dangerous substances to blame for increases in atmospheric temperature — the hothouse effect.

Gerda Strack

(Frankfurter Rundschau, 5 May 1987)

■ MEDICINE

Dentists chew over topic of implanting teeth instead of fitting them

Allgemeine Zeitung MAINZ

A tooth lost or extracted can sometimes be replaced by an artificial root topped with a crown rather than by a bridge or a plate.

The replacement, firmly implanted in the jawbone, hardly differs from the real thing and spares the owner the many inconveniences caused by conventional false teeth.

Implantology, dealing with tooth and bone implants, is a recent branch of dental science.

The high hopes held for it were evident at the fourth annual conference of the implantology group, in Mainz. Four hundred members of the German Dental Research Association belong to the group.

With Professor Peter Tetsch of Mainz University dental clinic in the chair, 450 dentists from Germany and abroad met in Mainz to consider possibilities of implanting individual teeth and to discuss the advantages of the new calcium phosphate ceramic materials.

Most cases of missing single teeth from people with healthy teeth are mainly in children and young people who have accidents.

Providing enough bone substance is available, the missing tooth can in such cases be replaced an artificial one.

Implants are also an important aid when a vital tooth is missing, ruling out a bridge. An implant can take its place.

The conference was given details of most encouraging results with implants used to anchor lower plates where no teeth whatever were left.

Artificial teeth, mostly made of titanium- or aluminium oxide-based ceramic materials, have been found to be satisfactory in terms of compatibility.

Trials of an extra coating of calcium phosphate-based ceramic are in progress. This new material will, it is hoped, help to further reduce immune response, or rejection of the implant as a foreign body.

It was reported to be particularly compatible with body tissue, Professor Tetsch said, and might in future be used not only for false teeth but also as a bone replacement for treating contraction of the jawbone, which was frequent in old age.

Keen interest has been shown in tooth implants. About 800 patients a year inquire about it at Mainz University dental clinic.

The treatment is given in about 50 per cent ot cases.

In the remainder it is impossible because of other ailments or because there is too little of the patient's natural jawbone substance left.

An estimated 15,000 implants a year are carried out in the Federal Republic of Germany. The treatment is given by specially trained dentists at university clinics and private practices.

It costs about DM1,000 per tooth, which the patient has to pay himself, plus ancillary treatment the cost of which is partly met by health insurance schemes.

At Mainz University dental clinic, which is one of the largest implant centres in Germany, teeth may be implanted free of charge as part of a research project.

A Tübingen University implant register was presented at the Mainz conference. Supplied with data by 150 dentists, it will be kept for 10 years to help evaluate experience with implants.

Statistical evidence has already proved, providing certain techniques are used, that 90 per cent of implants stay put — and can thus be rated a success — for 10 years.

Stefanie Mittenzwei

(Allgemeine Zeitung, Mainz, 30 April 1987)

'Improved' outlook for pancreas transplants in diabetics

Pancreas transplants for diabetics had been less successful than hoped but the outlook seemed to be improving, a Munich transplant specialist told a Wiesbaden conference of specialists in internal medicine.

Professor Walter Landgraf of the Munich University transplant centre was addressing an organ transplant symposium held as part of the Wiesbaden internal medicine congress.

Results seemed, he said, to have been improving for two years — so much so that serious consideration must be given to pancreas transplants as a treatment for patients suffering from diabetes since childhood or youth. The pancreas is the gland where vital insulin is produced in the body.

This I-type diabetes, affecting young people, requires constant insulin treatment to reduce the blood sugar count and enable patients to lead almost normal lives.

But after 15 to 20 years the first signs of long-term damage occur. It includes microangiopathia, or damage to minute blood vessels, that can cause loss of eyesight, macroangiopathia, or damage to large blood vessels, that can cause strokes and heart attacks, and kidney damage.

Pancreas transplants have so far been limited to patients with damaged kidneys and patients with retinopathia, or seriously damaged blood vessels at the back of the eye, even when their kidneys are still in reasonable working order.

Patients in the first category, Professor Landgraf said, are usually given a kidney and pancreas transplant.

Pancreas transplants are unsuitable for patients aged over 50 and for patients with serious coronary damage and damage to the blood vessels serving the brain.

Frankfurter Rundschau

In the past two years 27 diabetics were given pancreas transplants in Munich. None need insulin any longer, he said, and long-term complications had been halted.

There were even signs that they might be reversed. Nearly 60 per cent of transplant patients were found to have better vision, as against 30 per cent with no change and 12 per cent with poorer eyesight.

A "definite and dramatic improvement" in oxygen supply to the legs had also been observed. Yet five patients had had to have toes amputated; no-one was quite sure why.

Given experience gained, Professor Landgraf said, pancreas transplants ought not to be limited to diabetics already suffering from long-term damage.

They should be given a new pancreas as soon as they showed signs of kidney damage.

dpa

(Frankfurter Rundschau, 2 May 1987)

Longer-lasting artificial joints

About 70,000 patients a year in the Federal Republic undergo artificial joint surgery. Roughly 60,000 are given artificial hips and nearly 7,000 artificial knee joints.

Artificial joints that become part of the bone rather than being cemented into it are a substantial improvement, 300 experts from the United States, Austria, Switzerland, Holland and the Federal Republic were told at the first Barmbek orthopaedic symposium, held in Hamburg.

"Joints fixed to the bone by artificial cement can be expected to work loose after about 10 years," said congress chairman Professor Wolfram Thomas of Barmbek general hospital, Hamburg. The joint then needs replacing.

Artificial joints that do not use cement can be expected to have a longer life. They have been used for 14 years and are in increasing use.

The artificial joint forms part of the bone by means of the porous, sponge-like structure of its steel surface. It was developed and manufactured by a Lübeck firm, SG Implants.

The new joints enable patients to get up immediately and to leave hospital three or four weeks after the operation.

The scar heals completely within three or four months.

In Hamburg there is a waiting-list of three to five months.

The new joint enables patients to move normally but doctors advise against too strenuous physical activity. Too much movement causes wear and tear.

(Rheinische Post, Düsseldorf, 25 April 1987)

■ SOCIETY

Mickey Maus never gets older — just more expensive

Comics were originally a form of cartoon. One of these early comics was the German Max and Moritz series by Wilhelm Busch which appeared in the late 19th century and which has been standard reading for every German child ever since. In the 20th century, the comic styles began to vary. They used comic figures and highly exaggerated drawing styles. Adventure became the vogue. Some told stories and some dealt purely with the fantastic (Superman, Tarzan). Later, classic novels were produced in comic form. Comics leave their mark on their young readers. In this article for *Die Welt*, Jürgen Liminski looks at how nostalgia has created a market in old comics. He reports on the big annual comic mart in Cologne.

More than 6,000 comic fans descended in jubilant throngs this month to the biggest comic exchange mart in Germany in Cologne.

The former French Culture Minister, Jack Lang, once said comics were the art form of the century. His words found an echo here.

Everybody was there that mattered. Publishers and collectors. There were 250 exhibitors who filled the hall to the last inch.

There were artists, sellers of protective plastic envelopes, publishers' stands with photographic slides of title pages, there were price catalogues and new systems of filing.

The trend towards professionalism is obvious. There is even now an encyclopaedia, the *Illustrierte Deutsche Comicgeschichte*, (The Illustrated History of German Comics). The first five editions go up to H. It reflects for the serious nature of the increasing interest in the subject. The publisher is a collector in Cologne, Siegmar Wansel.

The prices are also getting sophisticated. The first edition of a "Herrn Bill" wild-west series from the 1950s costs 11,000 marks. Another western featuring "Texasreiter Hot Jerry" brings in 5,500 marks, the "Jagd nach dem Atomgeheimnis" (Hunt for the Atomic Secret) realises 5,000 marks.

Other lesser mortals are also bringing in fancy amounts, though. Akim, a gentleman who makes sure that justice and law-and-order reign in the jungle, brings in 800 marks for per edition.

A series called Classic Erotic comics,

DIE WELT

says the catalogue, have increased in value by more than 1,200 per cent in the past year up to 200 marks an edition. That is a typical movement in the market as a whole.

The children readers of comics have grown with the product: most of the nostalgia seekers and the buyers and sellers are between 25 and 40. So what is the future for the comic market? Is it likely to become out of fashion, as it has in France? No, says one exhibitor who has been here six times and who has already pencilled in his place for next year's event. "The market is far from becoming exhausted," he said.

Another said: "There's a market for everything here. But the best are the oldies."

The "oldies" are those fine, upstanding, high-principled heroes of yesteryear like Akim (whose beat is the jungle); Sigurd (a knight); Nick (who operates in space); Tom Bill and Blauer Pfeil (wild west); Fix und Foxi, Felix and — naturally — Micky Maus. And just because they have been reprinted time and time again, it doesn't mean to say that their prices have dropped.

The new, emerging trends: pre-war comics, comics featuring toys, advertising comics and newspaper comic strips. The pre-war comics will first next year be featured in the price catalogue.

With these, some collectors will now have potential fortunes — and others will have long since thrown theirs away.

One spokesman at the mart said that in foreign countries, these lines of comic are already in fashion. Germany, he said, is limping about a decade behind the times. So, therefore, that means another decade of boom at the German comic mart.

In 10 years, the older children will be about 50 — which was the age the wild-west hero Tom Bill reached the peak of his capabilities.

Jürgen Liminski

(Die Welt, Bonn, 5 May 1987)

Phone technician overhears murder plans

Lübecker Nachrichten

When a brother and his sister planned a murder by telephone, their conversation did not go unheard.

A post office technician repairing a faulty connection prolonged his work with interest when he accidentally heard the topic — the murder of the man's wife.

The technician heard the sister say: "She must be murdered." Police were alerted. They arrested both the 44-year-old man and the 64-year-old sister before they were able to put their plan into action.

The reason for the planned murder was that the man had been ordered by a family court to pay maintenance to his 26-year-old wife for her and their two children.

The cost was too much for the man, who lives in Krefeld, in the extreme west of North Rhine Westphalia, near the Dutch border. Now he and his sister are facing attempted murder charges before a Krefeld court.

A spokesman for the Posts and Telegraph Ministry said telephone maintenance workers occasionally broke into telephone conversations. It was sometimes technically unavoidable. The speakers notice nothing.

It was neither required by law nor common for technicians to declare that they were on the line.

The spokesman told the court: "For technicians, there is nothing less interesting than a running telephone conversation." In this case, a declaration that someone was on the line would only have caused the speakers to hang up. And the wife would now be dead.

Hans Wüllenweber

(Lübecker Nachrichten, 24 April 1987)

Students form tailor-made excuse service



Two Göttingen law students have begun an excuse-inventing service. Jörg Zehender, 21, and Roman Rahn, 20, founded Zero (from ZEhender and ROman) after Rahn had not turned up for an important lecture.

As they thought out an excuse the professor would swallow, the idea of Zero dawned. They wasted no time and began advertising. "Quick, original, reliable and discreet," are their advertising promises.

The response has been excellent, report the students, both of whom were born in Hamelin. Some of the callers merely treated the thing as a joke but others had specific requests.

Many of the callers were school pupils who either did not want to do classwork or who wanted "the usual excuses."

There was a worker who wanted an excuse for being an hour late for work; one man wanted an alibi because he had disapeared from a party with somebody's else's wife and needed to tell his own wife something. They claim they supplied watertight excuses in each case, but won't say what they actually did — that is a trade secret.

They don't want to give away the secrets of their success. But they say they don't tell lies.

Rahn says a lie and an excuse are not the same thing. The aim in every situation to find something that is just believable and at the same time logical. They don't help criminals. Callers must first explain the circumstances and then Zehender and Rahn try to find out details of the personality of the person who is meant to swallow the excuse.

There are some standard excuses that can be used over again such as what pupils say to teachers when they are late. "Teachers are all alike in this respect." But generally, there are no off-the-peg excuses. They must be tailor made.

Rahn says that when they know the personality of the target, they make a comparison with a similar person from someone they know and work out an individual solution.

The costs range from seven marks per excuse for school pupils, students, unemployed, social welfare beneficiaries and pensioners. Workers pay 17 marks and self-employed people up to 30 marks. There are discounts for a pack of three excuses together.

Matthias Brunnert

(Frankfurter Rundschau, 22 April 1987)

An elephant for every occasion

How would you like to be handed (perhaps that should be "trunked") some flowers by an Indian elephant? Or hire a real princess for an occasion?

If so, a new reference book can put you in touch with the suppliers — and the suppliers of many other oddities for almost any occasion. The book contains information about hiring, chartering, borrowing or employing all manner of things.

The princesses are real, the reader is assured, and they are "beautiful and sporting" and "read beautiful fairy tales." They also cost between 1,000 marks and 3,000 marks per engagement.

There is information about where to hire out Ivor the white rat and Doris the bird spider. And a slaughterman who will do the killing at your place.

The idea came from the book's compiler, 44-year-old Gerd Grützmacher, who suddenly needed a carpet-cleaning machine but couldn't get one anywhere. In his anger, he thought it would be a good idea to collect addresses that might be useful.

dpa

(Frankfurter Neue Presse, 24 April 1987)

Marco runs off to see England

Hamburg's harbour proved an irresistable source of excitement for 11 year old Marco — so much so that he left his school party to their day out and boarded the passenger ship *Hamburg* — destination: Harwich, Suffolk, England.

Police say Marco got on board unnoticed by mingling with the passengers. He found children of his own age to pass the time with and keep him supplied with food.

As the police search for him got under way on shore, he was on the high seas. He slept in an empty cabin.

Back in Hamburg, he thought the journey had been such a whizz that he decided to do it again. After the second return journey he disembarked and went to relatives, who notified his parents.

dpa

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 29 April 1987)

It's Marco — he's at it again!

Marco is at it again. The 11-year-old Hamburg boy, fresh from a double return trip on a ship to England and back, has now tried to get to West Berlin.

This time, he was less successful. Marco was on a shopping trip in Hamburg when the urge to travel once again descended on him. So he slipped away to the Hamburg *Hauptbahnhof*.

He travelled without a ticket on a train to Lübeck, north of Hamburg on the Baltic coast, where he changed to the Berlin train.

He escaped detection at the border checkpoint going into East Germany, but East German border guards found him during the journey.

They established his identity and returned him to the West, where his mother collected him — two days after he departed.

Andreas Moser

(Lübecker Nachrichten, 5 May 1987)

■ FRONTIERS

A bright garden show despite Greens' blues

The 1987 West German Garden Show in Düsseldorf, Buga '87, covers 87 hectares and has cost DM120 million.

The area includes 105,000 square metres of streams and ponds, 4.4 million plants and 4,500 trees.

More than 10,000 landscape gardeners have worked together to prepare 2,500 examples of their art.

It is expected that this year more than seven million people will visit the show. Buga '87's organisers have shifted the accent of it from a massive horticultural display to a gigantic school for people who garden for pleasure.

They are appealing to a large majority of people who want to get back to nature by tending boxes on the balcony or front gardens. Garden Show director Jürgen Laskowski believes that "the sensation today is the natural, the original," speaking of the results that emerged from many surveys.

He pointed out proudly to fields of grass, knee-high and grown without chemical fertilizers, open meadows in the Lower Rhine that had once almost disappeared but that were flourishing again and many plants that had long since been forgotten.

The 39-year-old Laskowski is proud of the fact that the River Düssel now flows through the park, a long forgetten rivulet that had been canalised underground.

It was on the banks of the Düssel and the Rhine that a village was established 699 years ago, a village that became Düsseldorf.

The 560,000 citizens of Düsseldorf regard this new park to the south of the city as an early birthday present.

The Show is financed by the state of North Rhine-Westphalia (not from central government). It has put two city industrial districts back on their feet that had long been neglected.

It has also helped do away with a notorious traffic snarl-up in the area. For more than 10 years the congestion, announced in traffic reports, has been poor advertising for the state capital.

Needless to say the Garden Show has not been put on without trouble, mainly from the Greens, who do not like the idea of a back-to-nature exhibition organised by the civic authorities.

They joined forces, rather, with grumbling allotment gardeners, whose allotments are right in the middle of the park.

They have been obliged to tidy up their plots and garden sheds to meet the glamour of the Garden Show.

The Greens have also discovered grumblings among residents who, until October, have to pay to go into the public gardens that have been integrated into the show.

The Greens have a lot of infuence in Düsseldorf's Town Hall, but the organisers of Buga '87 have craftily got round these protests.

Anyone who visits the Show during the 23 weeks it is on can get a refund for the season ticket at the end of Buga '87.

The organisers do not expect there to be a great run on funds to meet repayment demands.

But worries of this sort will be forgotten as the small Buga railway snakes its way through the park and amateur allotment gardeners show off their gardens.

Helmut Breuer

(Die Welt, Bonn, 30 April 1987)

A bloomin' whopper

The biggest flower in the world, this 1.7 metre (5ft 7in) amorphophallus titanium from the rain forest of Sumatra, reaches maximum height only once every 15-20 years — and then for just one day. Manfred Koenen, head of Bonn University's botanic garden, who brought the flower back from Sumatra, shows off the monster in Bonn. (Photo: dpa)

Planners consumed by the coffee-drinking syndrome

Frankfurter Allgemeine

Behind Munich's town hall there is an enormously valuable site, an open space called Marienhof which was bombed during the war.

Marienhof is larger than the better-known Marienplatz, the showpiece open area in front of the town hall.

Now, despite the fact that Munich needs open spaces, Marienhof is to be built over. A competition has thrown up a winning design: a sort of enclosed garden with many trees surrounded by glass and steel.

The planned glass halls and arcades reveal the horror of the vacant, a fear of empty spaces.

The two halls could house an art gallery and a palm garden. A cafe is unavoidable. It always is. Many city planners regard it as essential for any development to have places where coffee can be drunk. Few realise that intelligent people have better things to do than sit and drink coffee during the day. The town hall is bounded by three busy streets which are used by tens of thousands of pedestrians every day. The centre of Munich is crowded and pokey. Munich people complain about everything — about the weather and about high rents. But no one is complaining that, behind the town hall, there is a wide expanse of open space. No other city in Europe has such a building site in its centre — precisely the reason why it should remain as it is. The easiest and lightest answer was to do nothing except expand the green areas and cut back the parking space. The cost would be DM15 million. A woman who remained anonymous offered to provide the money if a "project" was put into effect — a warning to Mayor Georg Kronawitter, who has already said he has taken notice that fifteen million is fifteen million.

The first prize winner, Stephan Braunfels, proposed a kind of enclosed garden with many trees, surrounded by glass and steel.

Two halls could house an art gallery and a palm garden, along with a cafe.

Munich is badly in need of open spaces. In comparison with other German cities buildings crowd in on one another.

In the centre of the city everything is crowded narrowly together, full of nooks and crannies.

This was homely and cosy but certainly not splendid and the kind of thing associated with major cities.

If it had not been for the understanding of openness of King Ludwig I the traffic in the centre of Munich would be like that of a village.

Perhaps that would not be a bad idea in view of the pushing and shoving in the pedestrian zones around Marienplatz.

That should be grounds enough to create something that pedestrians badly need rather than a new glass palace, space, simply more space.

It would also be easy on the eye if a part of the city were free of buildings and without a facade every twenty metres.

The city council is not under time pressure to come to a decision about a project for the Marienhof, not under the pressure the architects pretend.

Munich citizens complain about everything, the weather and rents, but no one is complaining that behind the Town Hall there is a wide expanse of free space.

Many people who took part in the ideas competition said that the area should be planted with trees and not developed with buildings.

Roswin Finkenzeller

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 27 April 1987)

